

NESTS & EGGS
OF FAMILIAR
BRITISH BIRDS

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NESTS AND EGGS
OF
FAMILIAR BRITISH BIRDS,
DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED;
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE
HAUNTS AND HABITS OF THE FEATHERED ARCHITECTS,
AND THEIR TIMES AND MODES OF BUILDING;

BY H. G. ADAMS,
Author of "Favorite Song Birds," "A Story of the Seasons," &c.

WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES OF EGGS,
CONTAINING FORTY-EIGHT DIFFERENT SPECIES.

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, 5, PATERNOSTER ROW.

M DCCC LV.

INTRODUCTION.

TO MY YOUNG READERS!

You must not be frightened by two or three hard names which I am about to place before you; they are scientific terms, which are frequently used in connection with the subject of this little book, and which therefore ought to be understood by all who take pleasure in the study of that particular branch of Natural History, termed

OOLOGY.

That's a queer word, is it not? It looks like a word without a head, and so it is; the *Z* is gone, which would make it *Zoology*; this last word means, properly, the Science of Animals, teaching their nature, properties, classification, etc.; so that it is but another term for Natural History. It comes from two Greek words, about which I need not trouble you now. *O-ol-o-gy*—that's the way it's pronounced—signifies the science of eggs; it also comes from the Greek, as does *Oolite*, of which I shall have to say something when I come to write, for your instruction, a book about another *ology*, which has a *Ge* before it.

INCUBATION.

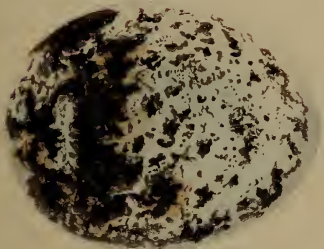
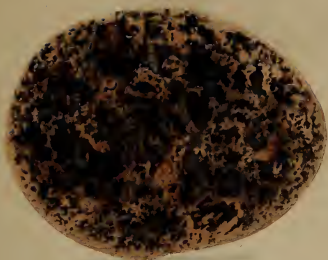
Such of you as have seen the *Patent Incubator*, a machine like an oven, by which eggs are *hatched* in large numbers without the help of the parent birds, will readily understand the meaning of this term—*In-cu-ba-tion*: it is derived from the Latin *incubatio*, to lie or sit upon. People who eat too much indigestible food, have frightful dreams, in which they fancy some ugly monster is sitting and pressing upon their chest, so as almost to prevent them breathing, and this is called an *Incubus*, a thing that sits *hard* and *close*, as a bird does upon her eggs.

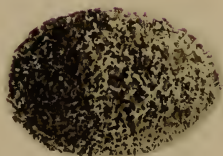
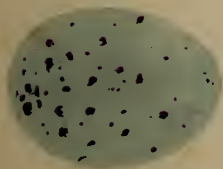
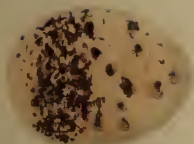
NIDIFICATION

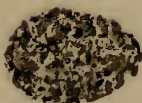
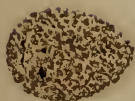
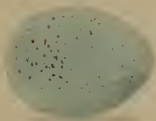
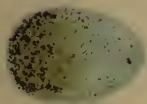
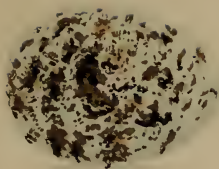
you will find explained further on, as I do not wish to give you too much to remember at once. And now let me say a few words about that beautiful structure, a Bird's Nest, and beg of you never to take or destroy one idly and wantonly, that is without there is some really useful end in view. For a mere momentary gratification, you have no right to render useless the labour of a little bird, and to inflict pain and sorrow on a creature so calculated to please your eye with its beauty, and delight your ear with its melodious song. If you are really a student of Natural History, and desire to form a collection of Nests and Eggs, I would say nothing against your taking as many specimens of both as may be *necessary* for your purpose; or if there is some sufficiently strong and good reason why the work of a feathered architect, with its interesting contents, should be destroyed, let it be done as quickly, and with as little suffering to the young or parent birds, as may be. When eggs only are required for a cabinet, if but one or two are taken from a nest, they will not be missed by the sitting bird. Always remember that the *eye of the Great Creator is upon you*, and that He will call you to account for every act of unnecessary cruelty.

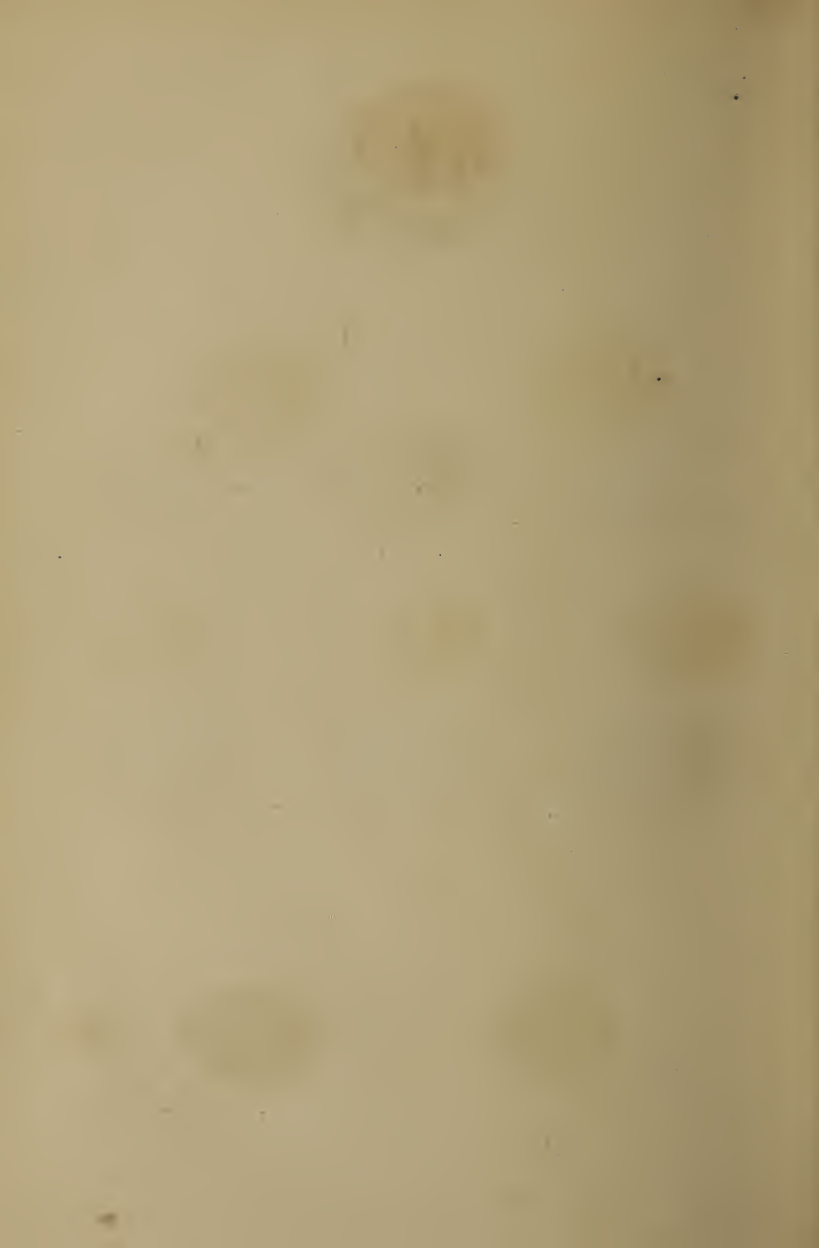
Thus much have I thought it necessary to say about "bird's-nesting"—a practice to which boys, especially idle and mischievous ones, are too much addicted. The following lines by Hurdis, on a Bird's Nest, should be read carefully and thoughtfully by all such, and they would, perhaps, be induced to refrain from destroying so wonderful a piece of Nature's architecture:—

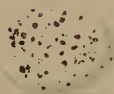
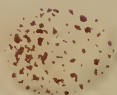
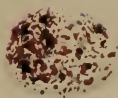
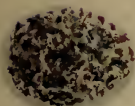
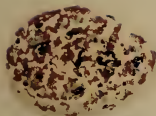
"But most of all it wins my admiration,
To view the structure of this little work,
A Bird's Nest. Mark it well, within, without;
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join: his little beak was all,
And yet how neatly finished. What nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
And twenty years' experience to boot,
Could make me such another? Fondly then
We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill
Instinctive genius foils."

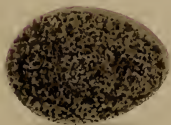
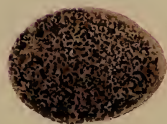
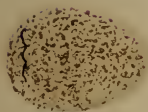
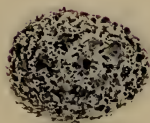
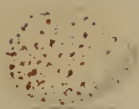


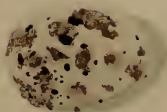
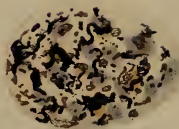
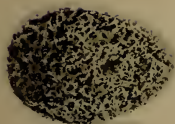


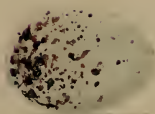
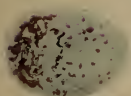
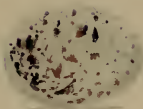
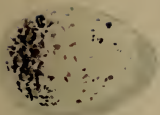
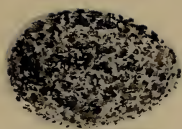












NESTS AND EGGS OF FAMILIAR BRITISH BIRDS.

GOLDEN EAGLE.

BLACK EAGLE. BROWN EAGLE. RING-TAILED EAGLE.

FIGURE 1.

SUCH are the various names by which this King of Birds is commonly known, all having reference to the colour of its plumage, which undergoes considerable changes in accordance with the bird's age and state of health. The term "golden" is probably derived from the rich tint of the feathers on the head and nape of the neck. Of Eagles we have in this country three kinds—the one above named, the Spotted Eagle, and the Osprey, or Sea Eagle: neither of them are common birds, but the Golden is the most so. It is found chiefly in the mountainous districts of Scotland and Ireland, where it builds its nest amid the inaccessible cliffs. My young readers will remember that magnificent description given of this rapacious bird in 'the book of Job:—

"The rock is the place of his habitation.
He abides in the crag, the place of strength.
Thence he pounces upon his prey.
His eyes discern afar off.
Even his young ones drink down blood:
And, wherever is slaughter, there is he."

The Scriptures contain many other striking allusions to the Eagle, of whose natural history enough might be told to fill

a book of itself, but our attention must for the present be directed to its place and method of nidification—there's a long word! try and remember it! Let's turn to the dictionary and see what it means. Here it is—Nid-i-fi-ca-tion, (five syllables,) the act of building nests. It is derived, we see, from the Latin *nidificatio*, and that comes from *nidus*, a nest; so you must not call a man who builds a house a nidicator; only birds, and some insects and fishes, nidify—men and beasts do not; for though we have sometimes heard of “a mare's nest,” yet we cannot learn that such a thing was ever seen.

But let us now take a peep into the eyrie of an Eagle—another curious word that; it is sometimes spelled eyry, and means a place where birds of prey build and hatch their young; thus Milton says—

“The Eagle and the Stork
On cliffs and cedar tops their *eyries* build.”

This word has a Greek root, or derivative, signifying egg, so that, you see, it is very appropriate. It is desirable that the meaning of these terms should be borne in mind, as I may often have occasion to use them.

We will now suppose ourselves standing upon a narrow ledge of rock, hundreds of feet above the rugged glen, through which rushes a foaming torrent, whose hoarse voice comes upon our ears like a faint whisper; far above us rise the mountain peaks, gleaming white in the sunshine; and all around is sky, and rolling mist, and awful silence. Hark to that rapid beat of wings! scarce heard at first, it grows each moment more and more distinct. See yonder speck floating up from the valley! Is it a bird? yes, and a large bird—an Eagle—a kingly Eagle! measuring, it may be, nine feet or more from tip to tip of the outspread pinions. It comes this way, and now from behind yonder projecting rock we hear shrill cries and fluttering sounds, which tell that the young birds are aware of the feast that their parent is bringing them. If we crouch close behind this detached mass, that looks ready to fall into the glen below, and peep through this fissure, we may see the family at their meal; they will all be there, for, see, the mother bird, who has also been out hunting for prey, approaches from an opposite direction. Awhile she hovered over the plain, floating almost motionless

in mid-air; a hare stole timidly out of its covert, to gambol among the heather on the hill side; her keen eye marked it in an instant; and "swoop" down she came, straight and swift as an arrow, and poor puss is borne aloft, writhing and struggling in the gripe of the fierce bird.

See! there is the nest in this hollow, formed in the face of the cliff by the projecting stump of a withered tree, around which some earth has accumulated, and coarse herbage taken root and flourished. The hollow is lined scantily with a little grass and sheep's wool, which has been used by the same pair of birds on this spot for many succeeding years. Sometimes the Eagle dispenses with a lining to its nest altogether, and deposits its two eggs (now and then, but very rarely, three) in the mere hollow in the rock; sometimes it uses small twigs or rushes, sea-weed or heather, for the purpose.

The eggs vary in colour, from an almost pure white, to a light russet brown, which however is not uniform, but is mottled and spotted: the size is generally about three inches long, by two and a third broad.

We will now leave the royal family at their feast—a young hare and a fat Sea Gull, the latter brought by the male bird, which we saw first returning, and descend, as best we may, from the perilous height whereon they have fixed their dwelling, fearless alike of the fowler's gun and the wintry storm, which, whistling and howling, sweeps around the cliff's tall head.

"The tawny Eagle seats his callow brood
High in the cliff, and feasts his young with blood;
On Snowdon's rocks, or Orkney's wide domain,
Whose beetling cliffs o'erhang the western main,
The royal bird his lonely kingdom forms
Amidst the gathering clouds and sullen storms;
Through the wide waste of air he darts his sight,
And holds his sounding pinions poised for flight:
With cruel eye premeditates the war,
And marks his destined victim from afar;
Descending in a whirlwind to the ground,
His pinions like the rush of waters sound;
The fairest of the fold he bears away,
And to his nest compels the struggling prey,
He scorns the game by meaner hunters tore,
And dips his talons in no vulgar gore."

Mrs. Barbauld.

PEREGRINE FALCON.

BLUE HAWK. GREY HAWK. HUNTING HAWK. GOSHAWK.
CLIFF-HAWK. COMMON FALCON.

FIGURE 2.

THIS bird with many names is the largest but one of the Falcon tribe, the very rare snowy Jer-Falcon only, being superior to it in size. The term Falcon is derived from *Falco*, to cut with a bill or hook; and Peregrine, from *Peregrinus*, a traveller, one who comes from a distant clime or country: these are both Latin derivations, and express, as do most of the scientific names used in natural history, some peculiarity in the conformation or habits of the creature to which they are applied. All the Falcons are distinguished by their sharp, powerful, curved beaks, adapted for tearing and cutting their prey; they are beautiful birds, graceful in their forms and motions, swift of flight, keen of sight, and exceedingly bold and destructive; they are to be found in almost every part of the world, ranging far and wide from their places of birth; truly *peregrinators* are they, or we should rather say wanderers or travellers, for although this term, and also *peregrination*, is to be found in the English dictionary, yet they are inconvenient words, and not often used.

Six species of Falcon have been found in Britain; these are the Jer-Falcon, a very rare bird; the one about which we are writing; the Hobby; the Orange-Legged Hobby; the Merlin; and the Kestrel, of which we shall have more to say presently. The term Falcon does not occur in our translation of the Scriptures, but the word which has been rendered Hawk, is supposed to refer to both Hawks and Falcons, these birds being nearly allied to, and greatly resembling, each other. In the ancient sport, called Falconry, and sometimes Hawking, both descriptions of birds were used to bring down the herons, and other feathered game. This cruel sport is not much practiced now, but a few trained birds are yet kept, and occasionally we hear of "a feat of Falconry," or "a Hawking match," a very different affair from the gay procession of knights and stately ladies, with multitudes of attendants, which in the olden

time, passed over the drawbridge of the grim castle, into the green fields, amid the ringing of silver bells attached to the necks of the hooded Falcons, and the *ti-ra-la* of bugles, calling forth echoes from the silent forest.

And startling the heron that stood by the lake
To watch the fish glide, as though scarcely awake,
And making the wild duck fly screaming away,
And the pheasant his golden plumes spread to the day.

A well-trained Falcon was, in former times, deemed a present worthy of a king's acceptance; thus we read that the king of Scotland sent Edward the First a present of a "Falcon-gentle;" and that in the reign of James I. one Sir Thomas Marson, gave one thousand pounds for a cast, that is a couple, of Hawks.

The nest of the Peregrine Falcon is usually found on high cliffs overhanging the sea; it is shallow, and loosely constructed of sticks, sea-weed, and such like coarse materials, and is commonly lined with a little hair; it is placed on a projection of the rock, or in a crevice, and is used by the same birds from year to year. A mere hollow in the bare rock is sometimes chosen by the hen bird, which deposits her eggs, from two to four in number, early in the spring; the colour is light brownish red, elegantly marbled over with darker shades, streaks, and patches: both the markings and ground colour vary considerably in different varieties, and in accordance with the age of the bird; the eggs generally measure about two inches in length, by one and a twelfth in breadth. The number of aquatic birds on which it can prey, is the Peregrine's chief attraction to the sea-coast; sometimes, however, it is found far in the interior, and an instance is on record of its having taken up its abode in the midst of London, on St. Paul's Cathedral; the attraction in this case being the nice plump pigeons which frequented the spot, one of which was struck and seized by the Falcon in Leicester Square.

High above the foaming seas,
Where the Guillemots are screaming,
Sets the Peregrine at ease,
Like a creature dreaming.
Is he wearied with his flight,
Circling wide and soaring high,
Seen amid the dawning light,
Like a faint speck in the sky?

Is he sleeping, while his young
 Watch him with their eager eyes?
 No, his pinions wide are flung
 On the gale, and piercing cries
 From the caves beneath arise.
 Auks and Penguins flap their wings,
 Gulls fly off, a shrieking crowd;
 Up his capture now he brings,
 Like a conqueror proud:
 Feathers fly, all stained with gore,
 On the rocky ledge are more
 Bones, though plentiful before.

KESTREL.

KASTRIL. KISTRIL. WINDHOVER. STONEGALL. STEINGALL.
 STANNEL. KEELIE.

FIGURE 3.

THIS bird is also sometimes improperly called the Sparrow Hawk, being confounded with the species which we shall next have to describe, and to which that name properly belongs: it is one of the commonest of British Falcons, and may be found in all parts of our country, as well as in every quarter of the globe. Its scientific name is *Falco Tinnunculus*, the latter term being derived, it is supposed, from the Latin verb *Tinnio*, to chirp. Although bold and fierce naturally, it is not a difficult bird to tame; this species of Falcon it was that formed one of the "Happy Family," lately exhibited in London and elsewhere, so that many of our readers may have seen a live Kestrel, although sadly "cribbed, cabined, and confined," not hovering, as the wild free creature loves to do, with outspread wings, over the field or woodland, ready to dart down upon the first unfortunate mouse, lizard, frog, leveret, or small bird, which ventures into the sunshine to enjoy itself.

The habit of hovering almost motionless in the air, with the tail extended, and the wings just slightly quivering, is quite characteristic of the Kestrel, and has gained for it the popular names of Stannel or Standgall, and Windhover; its descent upon its prey is described as resembling the falling of a stone from

a great height, being swift, direct, and noiseless, and the mark aimed at, although on many instances very small, is seldom missed.

The nest of this bird is sometimes placed on precipitous heights on the sea shore, or elsewhere; sometimes amid ruins, and on church towers; even in populous cities it has been known to build, and in dove-cotes, where it must have been a most unwelcome intruder; holes in sandy banks, where they are sufficiently high to be out of reach, and also in the trunks of old trees, are at times the chosen places; in the tops of trees, as commonly as anywhere, and the deserted nests of Magpies, Ravens, and Jackdaws, are often taken possession of. When the Kestrel does take the trouble to build a nest for itself, it proves but a slovenly workman; just a few twigs scrambled together, without much attempt at interweaving, and a little hay or wool, or a few feathers thrown inside, and the habitation is ready; no contract taken for a feathered building society, could be more hastily nor carelessly executed. When placed in rocks, or in banks, even this little trouble is dispensed with, and the nest is a mere hollow, with perhaps a few feathers inside. In fact none of these rapacious birds are careful builders—they never make their homes very comfortable; they are the warriors of the feathered creation, and they care not for home pleasures: a position of strength and security is all they look for, and snug, warm, cozy nests are not for them. Constantly abroad, battling with the elements or with their kind, pursuing their prey, and dipping their talons in gore, all their joys are of a fierce and exciting nature; they love not quietude, and peace dwells not in their habitations. They are most of them solitary birds, not congregating in flocks and forming little social communities, but living, each pair alone, like some robber in his rocky fortress, the terror of all around; nevertheless they have their uses in the great scheme of creation; and God has given to them their peculiar modes of enjoyment, with which, unless there is a real necessity for it, we should not interfere.

The eggs of the Kestrel are described by Mr. Morris, in his beautiful work on British Birds, as of an elliptical, that is of an oval form, four or five in number, sometimes, though very rarely, as many as six; of a reddish or yellowish brown colour, more or less speckled, or marbled over, with darker or lighter

specks or blots of the same, and some even with a dingy white. The size is on the average an inch and two-thirds in length, by an inch and a quarter in breadth, so that they approach very nearly to a sphere or globe in shape.

It was customary to keep Falcons trained for sport, hooded or blindfolded, until they were loosened in pursuit of the game, and it is said that if one escaped with its hood on, it would keep soaring upwards, until it dropped dead from exhaustion: hence a modern poet addressing ambition says—

“O thou who bidd’st the brightest veil
Their intellectual eye,
And to thy dizzy dangerous height
Like hooded Falcon fly.”

SPARROW HAWK.

FIGURE 4.

SINGULAR to say, this well-known bird seems really unprovided with an alias, or second name; Sparrow Hawk he is called everywhere, at least in this country, though, according to his scientific title, Finch Hawk would be equally appropriate. *Accipiter*, from *Accipio*, to take; and *Fringillarius*, from *Fringilla*, a Finch, being his Latin designation. The Ancient Britons, it appears, called him *Gwepia*; what that can mean we cannot exactly tell, but we should hardly think that it expressed any great degree of favour or affection. Next to the Kestrel, this is the most common of the Hawk and Falcon families, and no more daring or spirited bird is to be found. The Goshawk, a rare species in England, is a larger and more powerful bird, but not nearly so bold as this, which has been known to skim over the poultry-yard, and snatch up a chicken in the open day, when persons were looking on, and wondering at his impudence. Not always will the fear of the gamekeeper’s gun keep him from the preserve; and many a young plump Partridge and Pheasant has he borne away to his nest in the fir tree top, on the ruined tower, or on the rocky ledge, as the case may be. He chooses for his dwelling pretty much the same kind of places as the Kestrel, and, like that bird, frequently avails

himself of the labours of other feathered architects; sometimes ejecting the rightful owner of a nest to which he takes a fancy: he too is a slovenly builder when he does condescend to such mere drudgery, and takes as little trouble in the selection of his materials, as in the mode of putting them together.

The eggs of the Sparrow Hawk are nearly round, measuring about an inch and seven-twelfths in length, by an inch and a quarter in breadth; their markings of a deep reddish brown, upon a bluish white ground, are bold and striking, and seem characteristic of the bird, whose actions and motions are all decided, quick, and fearless. He has even been known to attack his fierce and powerful king, the Golden Eagle, and make it drop the prey which it was bearing to its expecting family of princes and princesses. Think of that! Perhaps this rebellious subject wanted the Grouse, which he obliged his monarch to relinquish, for his mate, who was sitting upon three, four, five, six, or it might be even seven eggs, in that slovenly home of his; these eggs might be of a bluish white colour, with large brown blotches dashed over the larger end; or of a pale dull olive, or of a dull white ground, with patches and streaks of various shades; or even of a clear white with no markings at all; but this latter is *very* unlikely, only one laying of such having been discovered, that we have heard of: and this was in a nest of five eggs procured in 1851, by N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, as recorded by Mr. Morris, in his "Nests and Eggs of British Birds."

High, high, in the clear blue sky,
 There is a shadow; the Hawk is nigh!
 Birds in the woodland cease to sing;
 Crows the cock defyingly:
 From the brown hen's swelling throat,
 "Cluck cluck," comes the warning note,
 As she gathers her chickens beneath her wing.
 Farmer Giles takes down his gun,
 And the ploughboy shades his eyes from the sun,
 And the dog looks on, expecting fun.
 Bang! no, missed! and the Hawk sweeps by,
 Turning round, as much as to say—
 I'm sorry you've thrown your powder away!
 I'll visit the farm-yard some other day.

BARN OWL.

CHURCH OWL. SCREECH OWL. WHITE OWL. HISSING OWL.
MADGE OWL. YELLOW OWL. HOWLET. GILLHOWTER.

FIGURE 5.

WE have here a good choice of names; our readers may take which they like, or they may go back to the Ancient British, and call the bird *Dylluan Wen*; or refer to the nomenclature of modern science, and speak of the *Strix Flamma*, the first term applying to the whole family of Owls, and the last derived from *flamma*, flame, distinguishing this particular species, the upper parts of whose plumage is mostly of a yellow colour. In the lists of British Birds given by naturalists, there are no less than ten distinct species of Owls, the smallest being the Scops, or Little Horned Owl, and the largest the Great Eagle Owl; these, and several others named in the lists, are very rare birds with us, indeed not above three of the species may be called common; the one which we are now noticing, the Mottled Tufted, and the Brown or Tawny Owl, may fairly claim this distinction, although the last named will soon, it is likely, become a rare bird, being devoted to death whenever found, partly on account of the superstitious dread inspired by its dismal hooting, and partly for its real or supposed destructiveness amongst the young of game, both furred and feathered. In truth, the dismal 'hoo-hoo-hoo' of the Tawny Owl, as well as the shriller screech of the White Owl, are enough to make one's hair stand on end, breaking, as they do, the stillness of the night, and filling church-yards, and all ruinous and desolate places, with strange unearthly echoes: but after all it is but the cry of a bird—an empty sound, proceeding from quite natural causes, and ought not to frighten us, any more than the ghost-like figure of the creature which emits it, which we sometimes catch a glimpse of as it glides in that noiseless manner peculiar to Owls, amid the twilight of evening, across the meadow and along the hedge-row, looking out for a stray mouse, or rat, or mole, or other small animal.

These Barn Owls are great destroyers of mice; a pair of them

have been known, as Bishop Stanley states, to take as many as forty to their nest in the course of an hour. How useful then must they be to man, who ought to protect, instead of destroy them, as he too often does: the little mischief which they do must be far more than counterbalanced by the war they wage upon all kinds of destructive vermin.

If you want to find a Barn Owl's nest, you must look for it—where? why in a barn of course; perhaps a hasty reader will reply; nay, not so fast: sometimes it may there be found; high up, above the stout cross-beam, beneath the thatched roof, with a thick curtain of cobweb before it, you may see, if you are venturesome enough to climb thus far, where a broadish ledge is formed by the meeting of the wall, and the thatch, and the old cross-beam, the rude structure—just a few sticks laid loosely together, with a little hay or straw on the top. And there sits the goggle-eyed, wise-looking bird, upon her two or three, or it may be as many as five or six, white roundish eggs, about an inch and a half long, by one and a quarter broad, as contented as possible. If the thrashers are at work below, she does not heed them at all, only keeps a sharp look out for the squeakers which they disturb in turning over the sheaves. Every now and then, down she comes upon her noiseless wings, with great swiftiness, her white and yellow plumage gleaming in the dusk like a flash of light; and ten to one but she returns to her nest with a live creature struggling in her claws, to be killed and eaten at leisure. If her young are hatched, her visits to the barn floor are very frequent indeed, and should there be no exit through the thatch, which there frequently is, her mate and she keep flying out and in at the door, as if they had a world of business in their hands, as indeed they have! Not commonly however does the Barn Owl obtain such comfortable quarters, but resorts to all sorts of out-of-the-way places: hollow trees, and ivy-covered steeples and ruins, the more dreary and lonesome the better, and if a building of any kind is deserted and gets “a bad name;” there, as Gray says in his beautiful “Elegy on a country church-yard”—

“The moping Owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.”

The Ancients, you know, dedicated the Owl to Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, on account, no doubt, of its exceedingly grave and sensible look. It is shewn by commentators, that is, writers who undertake to explain the meaning of the Scriptures, that the word translated Owl, in our version of the Bible, often refers to some other, and quite different bird. Several of the references are, however, correctly given, as in Isaiah, xxxiv. 14., where the "Screech Owl" is mentioned as a bird which haunts lonely and desolate places. We will leave our readers to find out this and other passages alluding to this bird; and treat them to an Owl song, written by Alfred Tennyson, the Poet Laureate of England:—

"When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round,—
Alone, and warming his five wits,
The White Owl in the Belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock has sung beneath the hatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay,—
Alone, and warming his five wits,
The White Owl in the belfry sits."

RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

BUTCHER BIRD. FLUSHER. CHEETER. MURDERING PIE. JACK

BAKER. WHISKEY JOHN. NINE-KILLER.

FIGURE 6.

HERE again we have a choice of names, and curious names some of them are, yet very complimentary to the bird, although sufficiently expressive of the estimation in which it is generally held. We cannot imagine for a moment that Jack Baker can be a respectable member of feathered society, and Whiskey John is evidently a haunter of public houses and such low places. The first, fourth, and last of the above names are really shocking; we do not care to repeat them; let us see if the scientific title

is more pleasing—*Lanius collurio*, from *lanius*, a butcher—ah! there we are again in the slaughter-house; and what the other term means, nobody seems to know, and it would not do for us to pretend to be wiser than the learned in such matters. The bird is called Flusher, or Flasher, because when it darts through the air, the rich reddish brown plumage on the back and wings has the effect of flashes of dull fire; and Cheeter, we suppose, from its peculiarly shrill harsh note, for all which, however, the bird is not a bad songster.

The Great Grey Shrike, and the Woodchat Shrike, are two other species of the *Lanius* genus, as naturalists call the Butcher Birds, which are found in this country. The one which we are noticing is by far the most common. It is a migratory bird, that is, one which does not remain all the year in a single district or country, but migrates, changes or shifts its residence, —*migro*, in Latin signifying to go, to depart. It arrives here at about the end of April or beginning of May, and leaves again in September or October, as many other birds do, for a warmer climate, where they will find a greater abundance of insects or other food. The Shrikes have been called Butcher Birds from a peculiar habit which they have of sticking their prey, which consists of lizards, frogs, mice, small birds, and the larger kinds of insects, upon thorns or other sharp projections, and so devouring it at leisure: they make a sort of shambles of the hedge-row, and perhaps drive a brisk trade in hind-quarters of cockroaches, mice tails, frogs' heads, and the like delicacies.

The nest of the Red-backed Shrike is rather a neat affair, large for the size of the bird, which seldom weighs more than an ounce, being six or seven inches across the top; stalks of plants, grass, wool, and moss form the exterior portion, while the lining is fine fibres of roots, and sometimes hair. The nest is placed in a hedge or bush, and generally but little concealed from view.

The eggs are five or six in number, usually of a pale reddish white, spotted with brown and red: they are ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven twelfths in breadth.

With eager eye, and half-expanded wings,
The Butcher Bird sits watching for its prey,
Amid the sunshine of a summer's day,

And many'a wary glance around he flings;
 In mid-air flit and flutter glittering things,
 Enjoying all life's pleasures while they may,
 Unconscious that the spoiler lurketh aye
 Where pleasure sweetly to the charmed ear sings;
 There is a whirring sound—a sudden cry;—
 The Butcher Bird hath darted from his twig,
 A form the less is in the sunny sky,
 But who shall heed its loss; that moment, big
 With fate to one, hath passed unmarked of all;
 So man sinks down, and dies, in life's great carnival.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

GREY FLYCATCHER. BEE BIRD. BEAM BIRD.
 COBWEB BIRD. POST BIRD. RAFTER. CHERRY CHOPPER.
 CHERRY SUCKER. CHANCHIDER.

FIGURE 7.

THIS bird, which was the *Y Gwybedog* of the Ancient British, is the *Muscicapa grisola* of modern naturalists, the first part of the name being compounded of the Latin words *musca*, a fly, and *capio*, to take or catch; we cannot tell what the meaning of the second part may be. The above popular titles would indicate that it is both a frugiverous and insectivorous bird, that is, that it feeds upon both fruits and insects, but of the former it takes so little as to be scarcely worthy of notice, although it is often destroyed under the idea that it is a great orchard depredator. When found in the cherry or fruit trees, it is generally in pursuit of insects which feed there, and of them it destroys immense numbers. It usually perches on the top of a branch, or some other projection; and looks "all of a lump," as if it were asleep; but woe be to the buzzing blue-bottle, or droning wasp, that comes near;—off it darts; the perch is empty for a moment; you hear a snap of the bill, and look up again, and there sits the little brown and grey bird, just as quietly as if nothing had happened. We have two species of Flycatchers in this country, the Pied, which is sometimes called the Goldfinch, and is a rare bird, and the Spotted or Grey Flycatcher. They are both migratory birds, coming in May, and departing in September or October.

The nest of our brisk little insect-killers is commonly built in the orchard or garden, or somewhere not far from the dwelling-house, and they are not at all shy or timid. Singular nesting-places are sometimes chosen by this bird, for instance the top of a lamp-post in Leeds, and even in the great city of London, near Portman Square, where, as Mr. Jesse mentions, a nest with five eggs, was taken; the head of a garden rake, left by accident near a cottage; a bird-cage suspended with the door open in the branch of a tree; the trellis-work over the drawing-room window of Nafferton vicarage, where Mr. Morris wrote his interesting account of this and other British Birds; and many instances of the kind might be mentioned.

The materials used for the nest, which is generally built about the beginning of June, are small twigs, catkins, and moss; the lining is feathers, hair, down, and cobwebs, hence one of the popular names of the bird; it is a neat little structure, and usually contains four or five eggs, of a greyish or greenish white, spotted with pale orange brown, and having sometimes blots of greyish red at the larger end; size, nine-twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad. There are sometimes two broods in the year.

THE PIED AND SPOTTED FLYCATCHERS.

One is a dweller 'mid the frowning hills
Of Derbyshire, and rocky Westmorland,
Where silent awe the gazer's bosom fills
To view the nodding tors and cliffs, that stand
In wild confusion tossed on every hand:—
To gaze adown the clefts and deep ravines,
And listen to the roar—as thunder grand—
Of falling waters;—yes, he loves those scenes,
Wherein the form of man but seldom intervenes.

The other, more familiar, makes his nest
Hard by the populous town; within the shed
Devoted to man's use, he takes his rest,
And there his callow brood are reared and fed;
And when the sun-kissed cherry turneth red,
Parents and younglings, to the orchard-ground
Are by the calls of secret instinct led,
For there their prey most plentiful is found,
In gauzy-winged flies the fruit that hover round.

DIPPER.

WATER OUZEL. WATER CROW. WATER PIET. DUCKER.

FIGURE 8.

THE scientific name of this bird is *Sturnus cinclus*, or as some say *Cinclus Europæus*, that is the European Dipper. It is a bird which frequents rivers and streams, perching on stones or on the banks, and descending to the bottom in search of aquatic insects and small shell-fish, on which it principally feeds. It possesses an extraordinary power of remaining a long time under water; and some writers have asserted that it can walk on the bed of the stream without inconvenience; but this does not appear to be correct; its breathing organs are like those of other birds, and although it has rather a stout heavy body, and little or no tail, yet its plumage is too light and buoyant to admit of such a feat. The bird just makes a rapid plunge, which carries it down, and remains only long enough to secure its prey, using no doubt great exertion, both with wings and legs, to keep itself beneath the water; the latter are short, and ill adapted for walking, but the claws are long and curved, and well calculated to secure a steady footing upon slippery stones.

The Dippers are tolerably numerous in this country, and yet they are not generally known, for they haunt retired spots, and are confined to few localities; they are more plentiful in Scotland than in England. They build a broad flattish nest, like a magnified powder-puff, with a little hole in front or on one side, only it is not made of white down, but generally of moss and grass, and lined with dry leaves. It is placed near the water, and usually concealed from view by an overhanging bank, a rocky projection, or the spreading roots of a river-side tree; it is a very warm comfortable abode, and large for the size of the bird; it has been found in the spokes of a disused water-wheel, and also in a very pretty picturesque situation, with the current of a cascade falling down before it like a glass curtain. When the little Dippers are nearly fledged, if you go too near the nest and frighten them, they will tumble out head over heels, and go plump into the water, in the most ludicrous manner imaginable.

The eggs of the Water Ouzel are five or six in number, of a longish oval shape, rather pointed at one end; their colour is pure white, and they are about an inch long, by nine-twelfths broad.

The neat little Dipper, he lives by the stream
Where the beams of the sun on the bright ripples gleam;
And he builds him a house all of moss, soft and warm,
To shelter his young from the wind and the storm.
There he pops in and out, and he flits up and down,
And he stays 'neath the wave, till you think he would drown.

MISSEL, OR, MISTLE THRUSH.

SHRITE. GREY THRUSH.

HOLM THRUSH. SCREECH THRUSH. STORM-CKOCK.

FIGURE 9.

THIS is the largest of British Song Birds, and a loud, strong-voiced, noisy fellow he is; taking delight to sit upon a post, or some elevated spot, when the wind is whistling, and the lightning flashing, and the thunder rattling around, and shriek away as if in defiance of the elements, whence he has obtained the two last of the above popular names. Naturalists call him *Turdus viscivorus*; the first word signifying a Thrush, and the second a plant growing upon the trunks of oak, ash, and other large trees, and called mistletoe; the juices of this plant are of a sticky nature, good for making bird-lime, to express which quality we have adopted the Latin phrase, and say viscid. Here again you see how expressive are those scientific terms if well looked into. Holm is an old Saxon term; it signifies the Ilex, or evergreen oak, and was applied to the bird probably because it was observed to frequent that kind of tree, on which the mistletoe, of whose berries it is very fond, grow most plentifully. Shrite must be also Saxon, no doubt expressive of the loud shrill note of the bird.

The Missel Thrush is a permanent resident in this country, although some flocks arrive here in October, and leave again in May, congregating with the Common Thrushes, Fieldfares, and

other birds of the kind, which settle on our snow-covered fields in winter, and afford some excellent sport for the fowler. It is a bold quarrelsome bird, and is frequently engaged in warfare, with other members of the feathered tribes, in which it is generally victorious; hence the Welsh people call it *Peun y llwyn*—master of the coppice.

Gilbert White, in his "Natural History of Selborne," a book full of interesting and entertaining observations on animals of all kinds, alludes to the fierceness of this bird, and says that in Hampshire it builds much in orchards. This naturalist also relates that, although the Missel Thrush is generally successful in defence of his family against the attacks of larger birds, yet he once observed several Magpies destroy both nest and young, which they swallowed alive, although the sitting hen used all her powers to repel them.

This bird is one of our earliest builders, commencing usually in April; the nest is fixed on the fork of a branch generally high up in the tree; frequently an apple tree in an orchard is the chosen spot; sometimes considerable art is displayed in concealing it from view, at others it is quite exposed. It is carefully and neatly made, externally with lichens, moss, dry grass, and stems of various plants; within which is a layer of mud, and over that a lining of fine grass.

The eggs are four or five in number, of a greenish white colour, spotted with reddish brown; sometimes the ground colour is reddish white, with dark red-brown spots. There are two broods in the year. In the spring and summer the bird feeds chiefly on worms and insects; in autumn and winter on various kinds of berries.

"See the *Blackbird* and the *Thrush*
Are inmates of the lowly bush;
And, nestling in the lofty tree,
The *Missel-bird* our inmate see.
Already may the curious eye,
Aslant their patient forms desery
Close cowering: let the passing glance
Suffice thee; nor with rush advance,
Or motion of the extended arm
The mother from her charge alarm."

Bishop Mant on April.

SONG THRUSH.

THRUSH. MAVIS. THROSTLE.

FIGURE 10.

Turdus musicus is the scientific name of this loud and sweet songster, which is one of the most common of our British Birds. Should my readers have forgotten what the first of these Latin terms signifies, let them turn to the bird last described; the second term has reference to its musical powers, which, as we all know, are very great. Old English and Scottish writers often allude to the Thrush under the name of Mavis and Throstle, and in Scotland to this day it is more frequently called by the first of these names than by any other; thus Burns says—

“The *Mavis* wild, wi’ many a note
Sings drowsy day to rest.”

While William Browne, an English poet of the seventeenth century, when he went forth in the morning, knew that it was *very* early, because

“The Throstle had not been
Gathering worms upon the green.”

And in these two short quotations we learn several interesting facts connected with the natural history of this bird. Thus Browne tells us, that it feeds upon worms, and gets up early in the morning, while the grass is moist with dew, to catch them. You know there is an old proverb which says “the early bird catches the worm,” indicating that those who wish to thrive must be industrious, and not lie a-bed too long. From Burns we learn that the Mavis wild, (that is shy, loving to hide in the hedges and bushes,) with many a note, (that is with a full rich song, having in it many changes and modulations,) sings drowsy day to rest, (that is, sings late into the evening, as we have all heard it, as though it were chanting a lullaby to the day, and inviting all nature to repose.) See now how much may be learned from the poets, if they are true poets, and have studied the wonderful works of God.

Of Thrushes there are several species in this country. In what is called the genus *Turdus*, naturalists have placed the Blackbird, which we shall have to speak of presently; the Missel and Song Thrushes; the Fieldfare, a common bird with us in the winter; the Redwing, also common at that season; the Ring Ouzel, a migratory bird, pretty much confined to the mountainous districts; and the Variegated Thrush, of which only a specimen or two has been taken here. These Thrushes are all of them insectivorous and frugiverous birds—I have already explained what these terms mean; seeds they sometimes take, and also grain when much pressed by hunger. Large flocks of the commoner kinds may be seen in winter about the fields and farm-yards, hunting the hedges for berries, and picking up whatever is eatable. They generally contrive to keep themselves in pretty fair condition, and as they are large birds, and their flesh is very good, they are worth shooting; so' that large flocks are every year much thinned by the fowler's gun; nor is this wanton cruelty; God has given these and all creatures for man's use, and he is quite justified in killing them, if it be to answer a beneficial end.

Like the Missel Thrush, the Throstle is an early breeder, and it has usually two broods in the year. The nest is frequently placed in the centre of an evergreen shrub, bush, or thick tree, such as the holly or fir; it is formed externally of moss and root fibres; over the interior is spread a fine even layer of cow-dung or mud, and rotten wood, forming a cement, which is impervious to wet; on this the eggs are placed; they are usually four or five in number, of a pretty light greenish blue colour, largely spotted with black, or very dark brown; in length about an inch; in breadth nine-twelfths of an inch. The Thrush has been known to build in an open shed or tool-house, and other exposed situations, but generally it takes good care to place its nest well out of reach, and hidden from prying eyes. Pity that so frequently its efforts at concealment are unavailing.

“Within a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
That overhung a mole-hill large and round,
I heard, from morn to morn, a merry Thrush,
Sing hymns to sunrise, while I drank the sound
With joy:—and often, an intruding guest,
I watch'd her secret toils from day to day,

How true she warp'd the moss to form her nest,
 And model'd it within with wood and clay.
 And by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
 There lay her shining eggs as bright as flowers,
 Ink-spotted-over shells of green and blue,
 And there I witness'd, in the summer hours,
 A brood of Nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
 Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky."

Clare.

BLACKBIRD.

BLACK THRUSH. OUZEL. GARDEN OUZEL. MERLE.

FIGURE 11.

THE haunts and habits of the Blackbird are much the same as those of the Thrush; it is a shy bird, and much more frequently heard than seen. From early dawn to evening twilight does its loud, clear, mellow song float over the landscape, and now and then we just catch a glimpse of its glossy black plumes and golden bill, as it flits from hedge to hedge, or passes from one leafy covert to another. We do not often see more than a single bird at a time, although most probably its mate is near at hand. This habit of singing and flying solitary is supposed to have gained for the bird the name Merle, by which it was once commonly known in this country, and also its scientific designation—*Turdus merula*, from *mera*, Latin, which sometimes signifies the same as *solus*—alone. Those writers who call the Thrush a Mavis, almost invariably call the Blackbird a Merle. You will recollect that the forester in Scott's "Lady of the Lake," sings—

"Merry it is in the good green wood,
 When the *Mavis* and *Merle* are singing."

Shakspeare gives us a variation of the term Ouzel as applied to this bird, describing it as

"The *Woosel-cock*, so black of hue,
 With orange tawny bill."

And by Drayton, another old English poet, we are told that

"On his dulcet pipe the *Merle* doth ever play."

The Blackbird is especially fond of cherries and other fruits, therefore does the gardener wage war against him, without taking into account the immense number of worms, slugs, snails, and insects which he destroys: he must do at least as much good as mischief, and should therefore, for the sake of his sweet song, be allowed to live and enjoy himself in his own way.

The centre of a thick bush is the place usually chosen for the Merle's nest; it is formed on the outside of coarse roots and strong bents of grass, plastered over the inside with mud, and lined with fine grass-stalks and hair, sometimes leaves. The eggs are four or five in number, now and then, but very rarely, six; the ground colour is usually light blue, not unlike the eggs of the Thrush, but the spots and freckles are of a pale reddish brown; at times the eggs are found without these altogether, and at others the markings are very faint indeed: there are two broods, the first being generally hatched at the end of March or beginning of April. In the year 1837, according to Mr. Blythe, a pair of these birds built four successive nests on an island in St. James' Park, London, and reared seventeen young ones.

Did my readers ever hear tell of a White Blackbird? Such a curiosity has been seen more than once, twice, or thrice. Albinos, as they are sometimes called, from the Latin *Albus*, white, are not so very uncommon. Hear what a beautiful song James Montgomery sings to the Blackbird.—

Golden Bill! Golden Bill!

Lo! the peep of day;
All the air is cool and still,
From the elm tree on the hill,

Chant away:

While the moon drops down the west,
Like thy mate upon her nest,
And the stars before the sun
Melt, like snow-flakes, one by one,
Let thy loud and welcome lay

Pour along

Few notes, but strong.

Jet-bright wing! jet-bright wing!
Flit across the sunset glade;
Lying there in wait to sing,
Listen with thy head awry,

Keeping tune with twinkling eye,
 While from all the woodland glade,
 Birds of every plume and note
 Strain the throat,
 Till both hill and valley ring,
 And the warbled minstrelsy,
 Ebbing, flowing, like the sea,
 Claims brief interludes for thee:
 Then with simple swell and fall,
 Breaking beautiful through all,
 Let thy Pan-like pipe repeat
 Few notes, but sweet!

RING OUZEL.

ROCK OUZEL. TOR OUZEL. MOUNTAIN OUZEL.
 MOUNTAIN BLACKBIRD. MOOR BLACKBIRD. WHITE-BREASTED
 BLACKBIRD. RINGED THRUSH, OR BLACKBIRD.

FIGURE 12.

WE have here a good many names, with but little variety of meaning; they all have reference either to the bird's place of abode—the wide, wild moor, and the rock mountain, or to the marks on its plumage, which are very distinct and unmistakeable. The French call the bird *Merle à plastron blanc*—the Merle, or Blackbird, with the white breastplate; the term Ouzel also comes from that language, being in old French, according to an authority named Nares, *Oisel*, which strikes us as very like *Oiseau*, the French for bird. *Turdus torquatus* is the scientific name of the Ring Ouzel, *torquatus* meaning one that wears a collar or chain. A naturalist named Hewitson says this bird sings sweetly, and Selby says clearly and powerfully, though the notes are few. With us it is a summer visitant only, and to be found but in certain parts of the country.

It builds a nest much like that of the Blackbird, which has been found under the shelter of a furze or juniper bush, on the face of a rough bank, and among fragments of rock. It lays from four to six eggs, of a pale bluish green, freckled over with pale brown; they are about an inch long, and ten-twelfths broad.

DUNNOCK.

HEDGE SPARROW. HEDGE CREEPER. HEDGE CHANTER.
DICK DUNNOCK. SHUFFLE-WING.

FIGURE 13.

THIS is a brisk lively little bird, something like the Wren, and almost as well known; it is called in scientific language *Accentor modularis*, the meaning of which we need scarcely explain, the terms being so much like English words, as to convey their own signification. The Alpine Accentor, or Chanter, sometimes called the Collared Starling, and this bird, are placed in a genus by themselves, by one of the British naturalists named Macgillivray. A genus in natural history, you should understand, is a distinct group of animals which have certain characteristics alike, and are therefore placed together for convenience. A genus may contain two distinct species, like this Accentor genus, or a dozen. The plural of genus is *genera*; it is a Latin phrase, and means literally a race or family. The first scientific name which we see attached to a bird or other classified object in nature, is the *generic* name, because it indicates the genus to which it belongs; the second is the *specific* name, that is, belonging to the species only. Try and remember this. We need not trouble you just now with orders and classes, they will come bye and bye, in another book perhaps. Now for an exercise. To what species of bird do those five light, greenish blue eggs belong? they are without spot or freckle, rather pointed in shape, nine or ten twelfths of an inch long, by seven twelfths broad; the nest which contains them is rather large for a small bird; it is formed of moss, fine roots, and wool, lined with hair, and placed in the lower part of an almost leafless hedge, where it can be easily seen and come at? Why the Hedge Sparrow's. Ah! to be sure, every school-boy knows that. And on every string of eggs hung up in the cottage or play-room, you will find such numbers of these pretty little blue ones, that the wonder is, that there are any sweet Hedge Warblers left to sing to us. Well, but to what *genus* does the bird belong! You have just told us the accentor *genus*. True, but you must not be surprised, if, when you take in hand a large natural history,

you find some other generic name, such as *Motacilla*, going before *modularis*, for different naturalists have their different methods of arrangement—more's the pity—and sadly they puzzle the student sometimes to find out the proper place of a bird, in their widely-differing systems.

But we are forgetting our friend the Shuffle-wing, so called from a peculiar habit which he has of shaking his wings, while singing his clear and pleasantly modulated song. It is in the nest of this bird, which is sometimes called the Titling, that the Cuckoo often deposits its single egg, and leaves its young to be brought up. The little monster soon outgrows the young Sparrows, and sometimes even turns them out of the nest, greatly to the astonishment and fear of the mother bird, whose utmost powers are taxed to supply her voracious foster-child with enough food. It has even been asserted by an ancient author named Aristotle, that the young Cuckoo eventually eats its kind protector up; but this cannot be true, although given countenance to by Shakspeare, who makes the fool in the play of "King Lear" say, in allusion to the King's ungrateful daughters,—

"The Hedge Sparrow fed the Cuckoo so long,
That she had her head bit off by her young."

REDBREAST.

ROBIN. ROBINET. RUDDOCK.

FIGURE 14.

IN all countries where this bird is known, and there are few where he is not, he is distinguished by some familiar term of endearment. Thus, in Sweden, they call him *Tommi-Liden*; in Norway, *Peter Ronsmed*; in Germany, *Thomas Guidito*: Bob and Bobby are common names for him in this country, and with old and young, rich and poor, he is a prime favourite. Our great poet Wordsworth, has addressed him in these lines:—

"Thou art the bird whom man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,

Our little English Robin;
 The bird that comes about our doors
 When autumn winds are sobbing!
 Thou art the Peter of Norway boors!
 Their Thomas in Finland,
 And Russia far inland!
 The bird, which by some name or other,
 All men who know thee call thee brother."

Except the Nightingale and Skylark, there is no bird which the poets have so much delighted to honour as this; and in the memory of childhood, it is associated with all that is gentle and kind; for is it not said in that beautiful and pathetic ballad, "The Children in the Wood," that

"No burial these pretty babes
 Of any man receives;
 But Robin Redbreast painfully,

that is, carefully—tenderly--

Did cover them with leaves."

Yes, the spruce Robinet, the cheerful Ruddock, is a welcome visitor everywhere; and in the dreary winter time, he makes himself quite at home by many a country window-sill, and even fireside; and warbles his short sweet song, as though he were grateful for the daily dole of crumbs, and the kind words which he is sure to receive. William Howitt tells us that when he was in Winchester, he saw, amid the deserted cloisters of Wyckham's College, a Robin, which, the porter told him, was the chapel bird, that regularly attended Divine Service—a pious bird indeed!

But if we were to enter upon the anecdotal part of Robinet's history, there is no telling when we should end; so we had better not begin. Now, what do our young readers think the naturalists call this simple little bird? They will never guess, so we will tell them:—*Motacilla*, or *Sylvia*, or *Erithacus rubecula*; the first three being generic names, and the last specific—distinguishing the particular species; it comes from the Latin *rubra*, meaning red. The French call this bird *Bec-fin Rouge-gorge*—Sharp-beak, Red-throat; and the Germans, *Das Rothkehlchen*. So that our Robin is not without high-sounding titles; enough to make him proud, one would think! And a

proud bird he is too, and quarrelsome withal, if the truth must be told—a very Turk among his kind: two male Robins seldom meet without fighting, and their contests are often fierce and bloody.

The nest of the Robin is generally placed under a hedge, or bush, or tuft of herbage, on the ground; sometimes in a mossy bank, or grassy knoll, and it has been found in a deserted mole-hill. It is related in Mr. Yarrell's "History of British Birds," that one of these nests was built in a small saw-pit, and that the female continued to sit, although the sawing of timber went on every day during the hatching of the eggs, and rearing the young. Another pair of Robins, as stated in the "Field Naturalist's Magazine," built three successive nests in a cottage which adjoined a noisy blacksmith's shop, and which, although not actually inhabited, was used as a kind of store-house, and constantly visited. First, they chose a child's covered cart, which was hanging on a peg over the fire-place; then a shelf on the opposite side of the room, close to an old mouse-trap; and then another shelf in a different corner, where there was a bundle of papers. Many persons visited these nests out of curiosity, but did not alarm the old birds, which flew in and out to feed their young through an open window-frame.

The Robin breeds early in the spring; its nest is rather bulky, being formed of moss, dead leaves, and dry grass, and lined with hair, and sometimes a few feathers. The eggs are from five to seven in number, spotted with pale reddish brown, which sometimes has a purple tinge on a white ground. They are of a regular oval form, nine and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven and a half broad. The poet of Dartmoor, Carrington, thus addresses the Robin:—

Sweet bird of autumn, silent is the song
Of earth and sky, that in the summer hour
Rang joyously, and thou alone art left
Sole minstrel of the dull and sinking year,
But trust me, warbler, lovelier lay than this,
Which now thou pourest to the chilling eve,
The joy-inspiring summer never knew.
The very children love to hear thy tale,
And talk of thee in many a legend wild,
And bless thee for those touching notes of thine!

REDSTART.

REDTAIL. FIRETAIL.

FIGURE 15.

ACCORDING to Macgillivray, we have in this country two species of Redstarts, besides the one above named, which he calls the White-fronted Redstart; the others are the Blue-throated and the Black-breasted, or 'Lithy's Redstart: the former is often called the Blue-throated Warbler. These are both uncommon birds with us, while the Red, or Firetail, as it is sometimes termed, on account of the orange tint of the tail, is by no means so. It is a lively bird, and a sweet songster, possessing great imitative powers. Its Latin name is *Motacilla* or *Sylvia phœnicurus*; the first generic name signifying a Wagtail, the second having reference to a wood; and the specific term being that used by the old natural historian Pliny, to denote, as it is supposed, a bird of this kind.

The Common Redstart is a migratory bird, arriving in this country from the middle to the end of April, and leaving in October. Its nest, which is composed of fibrous roots and moss, and plentifully lined with hairs, is frequently placed in a hole or chink of an old wall, sometimes in a hollow tree, or behind a branch nailed against a wall: it has been discovered in a hole in the ground. The eggs are of a uniform bluish green colour, very like those of the Hedge Sparrow; than which, however, they are somewhat smaller, being nine-twelfths of an inch in length, by six-twelfths in breadth; they vary in number from four to seven, sometimes eight.

The lively Redstart strains his little throat,
Perch'd on an orchard tree throughout the day;
When downy seeds upon the breezes float,
And withered leaves begin to strew the way;
And although bright the sunny beams that play
Upon the landscape, yet all things denote
The glory of the year hath pass'd away:
And there he warbles out his farewell note.
Soon will his desultory song be heard
In climes more bright and balmier than ours;
The cold, ungenial north suits not this bird,
And so he journeys to a land, where bowers
Are ever green, to visit us again
When the sweet smile of April lights the plain.

STONECHAT.

STONESMICH, OR SMITH. STONECHATTER. STONECHINK. BLACK CAP.
MOOR TITLING. BLACKY-TOP.

FIGURE 16.

Motacilla, or *Sylvia rubicola* is the scientific name of this bird. Our readers need not to be again told the meaning of the generic terms, and the derivation of *rubicola* appears to be from *rubus*, a bramble, and *colo*, to inhabit. No part of the Stonechat's plumage is decidedly red, but the breast and the edging of the wings, and the tail, having a rusty tinge, impart a reddish hue to the whole figure of the bird, which Macgillivray calls the Black-headed Bushchat; the French name for it is *Le Traquet*—a mill clapper; from this, and his popular English names, we may safely conclude that he is a noisy fellow—a chatterer! as indeed he is; jerking himself about among the whin and gorse bushes, beneath which, in juniper and other low shrubs, his nest is generally made. He fills the lonely places which he frequents with his sharp broken notes, like the syllables *snack*, *chat*, or *chit*.

This bird appears to be but a partial migrant, for, although many leave the country in the autumn, yet some are to be found here the whole winter through. It builds a large nest for its size, of grass and moss, lined with finer grass, fibrous roots, hair, and wool. The eggs are of a light greenish blue colour, marked toward the larger end with spots of pale brown; the number is five or six; the size, eight-twelfths and a half long, by seven-twelfths broad.

Shy bird of the common, that makest thy home
In the furze bush, all spangled with blossoms of gold,
Where seldom the wandering citizens come,
Or rustics approach, thy retreat to behold.
Thou singest thy song in the wilderness wild,
To the burrowing rabbit, and lonely *Pee-wheet*;
Like a hermit, no more by youth's feelings beguiled,
Who knoweth the pleasures of life are a cheat.

WHINCHAT.

FURZECCHAT. WHIN BUSHCHAT. GRASSCHAT.

FIGURE 17.

THIS the French call *Le Grand Traquet*, as if he were indeed something like a chatterer! that other made a noise like a mill clapper, but this! oh, this resembles a great mill clapper!! and yet we cannot learn that he makes a greater noise than his congener, as a bird of the same genus would be called. On the contrary, he seems the more quiet of the two—his sharp cry not being so frequently heard, and his song being more soft and agreeable. In their general habits and modes of life, these two Chats are very similar, but the one which we are now noticing appears to be altogether migratory, none remaining in this country during the winter. It builds a nest of much the same materials as the Stonechat; places it also upon the ground; and lays in it five or six bluish green eggs, sometimes marked with reddish brown spots, but more frequently quite plain; size, eight-twelfths and a half long, by six and a half broad.

The scientific name of this species is *Motacilla* or *Sylvia rubetra*; in Latin the word *rubetra* signifies a toad of a red colour that keeps about bushes; and the marks on the head of the Whinchat, bearing some resemblance to those on the skin of that animal, gave rise to this specific name.

This bird and the Stonechat feed chiefly on beetles and other insects. Bishop Mant tells us, in his description of the month of April—

“How in wild moor, or sterile heath,
Bright with the golden furze, beneath
O’erhanging bush or shelving stone,
The little Stonechat dwells alone,
Or near his brother of the Whin;
Among the foremost to begin
His pretty love-song’s tinkling sound;—
Not heedless of the winding pass,
That leads him through the secret grass.”

WHEATEAR.

WHITERUMP. WHITETAIL. STONECHAT. STONECHACK.
FALLOWSNATCH. FALLOWCHAT. SNORTER. ENGLISH ORTOLAN.

FIGURE 18.

ONE of the popular names of this bird, we see, is the same as that which properly belongs to the species just described—the Stonechat; and indeed Macgillivray calls this bird, which is distinguished by the scientific title *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia ænanthe*, the White-rumped Stonechat. Yarrell, and most other naturalists however term it the Wheatear, and that is the name by which it is generally known. It has more white about its plumage than the other Chats, which in habits and general conformation it greatly resembles.

It is said to be the earliest of our summer visitants, generally arriving about the middle of March, and has been seen in the country as late as November 17th., at which date Mr. Sweet observed a pair near a gravel-pit in Hyde Park, flying about in pursuit of insects—the chief food of this bird. Sandy downs, chalk and gravel-pits, and stony slopes, and such places where there are plenty of holes for building in, are chiefly resorted to by the Wheatear, which is sometimes called the Fallow Finch, because it frequents lands which lie fallow, or uncultivated.

The nest of this species is often hidden deep in sandy banks or chalky cavities, sometimes in rabbit-burrows; it is composed of grass, roots, and moss, with a lining of hair, wool, and feathers. The eggs are from four to seven in number; pale greenish blue; ten-twelfths of an inch long, seven-twelfths broad. The author, whose lines we have quoted on the opposite page, also alludes to this bird, saying—

“In the wild rabbit’s haunt, or field,
Where the brown fallow, newly tilled,
The reptiles ’mid the crumbling soil
Upturns, or flies, his favourite spoil,
Fain would I see the Wheatear show,
In the dark sward, his rump of snow,
Of spotless brightness.

SEDGE WARBLER.

SEDGE BIRD. SEDGE WREN. SEDGE REEDLING.

FIGURE 19.

NATURALISTS call this pretty little bird *Motacilla* or *Sylvia salicaria*, from *salix*, a willow, because it is usually found in moist marshy places, where willow trees best flourish; here too grow the sedges and rushes, amid which it loves to sport and build, and hence the popular names of the bird. Another scientific name for it is *Salicaria phragmitis*, from the Latin *Phragmitis*, a reed or cane: so the French say *Bec-fin Phragmite*, when speaking of the sprightly Reedling—not an uncommon bird in the marshy districts of this country, although but little known to people generally, on account of its retired habits. It is a summer visitor only, arriving in April and leaving again in September.

Like most of the true Warblers it is insectivorous, and the tall aquatic plants are its game preserves; there it finds in abundance sprawling water-beetles, and spiders, and dancing gnats, and dragon-flies, gleaming in the sun like winged emeralds, and feeds away right merrily: there it places on the ground its large, loosely-constructed nest of moss and coarse grass, lined with finer grass, and perhaps a little hair intermixed, within which are placed five or six eggs, of a greenish or yellowish white, spotted or freckled with light brown. The young are hatched towards the end of May, or beginning of June. Brown and dingy white are the prevailing colours of the plumage of this bird, which is a sweet songster, singing all day long, and easily urged into song, if, when it chances to be silent, a stone is thrown at it! Its singing is very singular, as it sounds forth from the reedy waters late at night, when hundreds of voices seem sometimes joining in concert; and the traveller, at that lone hour, listens with wonder and pleasure to the strange tones.

REED WARBLER.

REED WREN. MARSH REEDLING.

FIGURE 20.

Motacilla, or *Sylvia arundinacea*, is the title assigned to this bird in the lists of most naturalists, and the reason of the generic term will be at once perceived, when we state that *arundo* in Latin means a reed or cane. The places of resort, habits, and general appearance of this bird are so similar to those of the Sedge Warbler, that the two are generally confounded. The nest, however, affords an obvious mark of distinction; being, in this species, generally somewhat elevated above the ground, and supported by the stalks of the reeds or rushes around which it is woven. It is rather a deep structure, somewhat in the form of an inverted cone, or, to be plainer, a sugar-loaf turned upside down, only not so long in proportion to its breadth as that. It is sometimes built so close to the river, that, at every flow of the tide, the water covers the ground beneath it, and there it hangs, swayed to and fro by the gale which whistles amid the sedges around, and waves about their long streamer-like leaves—as pretty a sight as the eye need wish to see; especially if there should be four or five little cheepers peeping over the edges, and saying, as well as they are able, “give, give!” while the old birds flit in and out of the reedy forest, bringing food, and at times stopping to pour out the low sweet warble peculiarly their own, or to imitate the notes of some other bird, that chances to be singing near at hand. Often is this warble heard in calm clear summer nights, hence the term Night Warbler has been applied to the bird; when it ceases to sing, should any one be desirous to hear it again, a stone thrown into the lurking-place of the songster, will generally attain the desired object. *Bec-fin des Roseaux* is the French name for this bird; *des Roseaux* meaning of the reeds.

Its nest is composed of the same materials as that of the Sedge Warbler, and the eggs are about the same in number and size; that is eight-twelfths of an inch long, by six-twelfths

in breadth, of a greenish white colour, spotted with ash-green and light brown. The following descriptive lines will suit equally well for either bird:—

Where rushes hide the stagnant pool, or fringe the gliding stream,
And in the sunshine dragon-flies, like winged jewels, gleam;
Where on the borders of the marsh, the stunted hawthorns grow,
And thrift, and wild sea-lavender, shed o'er a purple glow;
Where alders tremulously stand, and osier twigs are seen
To dance unto the singing breeze, like fairies clad in green;
Where drooping willows kiss the wave, and whistling reeds in ranks,
Incline their velvet heads unto the shores, and shelving banks;
Where dives the sullen water-rat; where leaps the speckled frog;
And flies and midges gaily sport above the quaking bog;—
'Tis there the blithe Sedge Warbler dwells, and there his nest he builds,
In rushy tuft, or whatsoe'er the needful shelter yields;
'Tis there he singeth constantly, a sweet, though scarce-heard song,
When skies are beautifully blue, and summer days are long,
And sometimes in the misty morn, and sometimes in the night,
He chanteth out right merrily, to show his heart is light:
He glanceth 'twixt the bending reeds, and skimmeth o'er the tide,
And many a snug retreat is there, his form from foes to hide;
Come weal, come woe, his constant mate still sitteth on her nest,
And food is plentiful, that he may pick and choose the best;
And for his rising family he hath no anxious cares,
Like men, that know the world is full of pitfalls and of snares,
With fears, that truly prophesy, his heart is never stirred;
He is unconscious of all these—oh, happy, happy bird!

NIGHTINGALE.

FIGURE 21.

WE are almost afraid to begin about the Nightingale, lest we should never leave off again; the subject being one which a real lover of birds can scarcely treat of in plain prose, or in a limited space. Singular to say, this chief of feathered songsters has but one common name; at least in this country, where it is universally called the Nightingale—the name being composed of two Saxon words, signifying night and to sing. My readers are not, however, to imagine that because they hear this bird spoken of as the bird of night, the songster of the night, and so on, that it only sings during the silent hours usually devoted to sleep; its melodious song may be constantly heard in the day-time, from April, when it arrives in this

country, to the beginning of June, when it usually becomes silent, or utters only an occasional hoarse kind of croak, which is supposed to be a warning of approaching danger to its mate or young. The Nightingale is frequently alluded to by the poets under the name of Philomel, and this may be called the classical name of the bird, because it is taken from Ovid, a Latin poet, who tells a story about a human being who was metamorphosed, or changed, into this sweet songster, which is much more poetical than probable. However, some naturalists have adopted the name, and say *Philomela luscinia*, and the only explanation of the latter term we can give, is, that *luscinia*, in Latin, means a Nightingale. *Motacilla*, *Sylvia*, and *Curruca*, are also generic names applied by naturalists to this bird, which is called in French *Bec-fin Rossignol*, the latter term having no other meaning, that we are aware of, than Nightingale.

Such of my readers as have not yet heard the music of this delightful songster, have indeed a treat in store. We wonder not that old Izaak Walton should have exclaimed, when listening to its rich burst of harmony, "Lord! what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou givest bad men such music on earth?"

The chief haunts of the Nightingale are copses, shrubberies, and thick hedge-rows, where it can be well screened from view. It delights to be in the neighbourhood of running streams, as it there finds the greatest abundance of insect food: it returns year after year to the same spot, and delights the same ears with its melodious song. Shame that so frequently the trap and snare should deprive a whole neighbourhood of this gratification; but so it is—the bird is easily caught, and there are those who make a business of capturing the sweet songster, and consigning it a prison for life.

The nest of the Nightingale, as Mr. Morris tells us "is almost always placed on the ground, in some natural hollow, amongst the roots of a tree, on a bank, or at the foot of a hedge-row, though sometimes two or three feet from the surface; it is very loosely put together, and is formed of various materials, such as dried stalks of grasses, and leaves, small fibrous roots, and bits of bark, lined with a few hairs and the finer portions

of the grass. It is about five inches and a half in external diameter, by about three internally; and is about three and a half inches deep."

The eggs, which are laid in May, are rather large for the size of the bird, being nine and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven-twelfths broad. They are four, five, or six in number, of a regular oval form, and usually of an uniform glossy dull olive-brown colour; sometimes they are tinged with greyish blue, and some have more or less of green prevailing in the ground colour, or mottling the surface. The young birds are hatched in June, and are frequently seen hopping about the ground in the neighbourhood of the nest, long before they are able to fly. The poet Clare has so faithfully and beautifully described the haunt and nest of the Nightingale, that we are tempted to make a long extract.

"Up this green woodland ride let's softly rove
And list the Nightingale—she dwells just here,
Hush! let the wood gate softly clap for fear
The noise might drive her from her home of love.

* * * * *

We will not plunder music of its dower,
Nor turn this spot of happiness to thrall,
For melody seems hid in every flower
That blossoms near thy home. These harebells all
Seem bowing with the beautiful in song:
And gaping cuckoo-flower, with spotted leaves,
Seems blushing of the singing it has heard.
How curious is the nest; no other bird
Uses such loose materials: dead oaken leaves
Are placed without, and velvet moss within,
And little scraps of grass, and scant and spare,
What scarcely seem materials, down and hair;
For from men's haunts she nothing seems to win.
Yet nature is the builder, and contrives
Homes for her children's comfort, even here,
Where solitude's disciples spend their lives
Unseen, save when a wanderer passes near
That loves such pleasant places. Deep adown
The nest is made, a hermit's mossy cell;
Snug lie her curious eggs, in number five,
Of deadened green, or rather olive brown;
And the old prickly thorn bush guards them well.
So here we'll leave them, still unknown to wrong,
As the old woodlands' legacy of song,"

BLACKCAP.

BLACKCAP WARBLER. MOCK NIGHTINGALE.

FIGURE 22.

SCIENTIFIC name, *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia atricapilla*, from *ater*, black; and *capillus*, the hair of the head. We know an old gentleman, who wears a short, crisp, round, black wig, whom we never look at without being reminded of the Blackcap, he has such a sharp knowing look, just like the bird has; we never heard him sing, so cannot tell what his musical powers may be, but if they are anything like those of the Mock Nightingale, it would be worth going some distance to listen to him; for this bird is, next to the real Nightingale, the sweetest song-ster of the woodland choir, or, if not of the whole choir, the sweetest of the Warbler family.

The question may here arise in the minds of our readers—are not all song birds Warblers? If we take the common meaning of the term warble, which is to sing—to utter musically, undoubtedly they are; but when we speak of Warblers in Natural History, we mean a certain order or family of song birds, which have certain common characteristics, and are therefore grouped together, under the generic term *Sylviadæ*. A very interesting account of this *Sylvia* genus has been written by Mr. Sweet, who paid great attention to their habits and capabilities, especially in a state of confinement. These are all what are called soft-billed, or insect-eating birds—the most difficult of any to rear and preserve in health; they are all more or less gifted with musical powers, and therefore worth having considerable pains bestowed upon them. Let it be understood, then, that when we speak of Warblers, we mean birds of this genus, *Sylvia*.

The Blackcap, which the French Naturalist, Buffon, calls *Fauvette à tête noir*—the Fauvette with the black head—generally arrives in this country about the middle of April, and leaves again in September: some few, it appears, remain through the winter. It is a bird of shy and retired habits, haunting much the same spots as the Nightingale, although it is not so

local in its distribution as that bird, that is, it is more widely and generally distributed.

The nest, which is built about the end of May, or beginning of June, is made of dry grass and small fibrous roots, with sometimes a little hair and moss; spiders' web and wool are also occasionally used by the bird to make his structure, which is a tolerably neat one; it is usually lined with hair, and placed in a bramble or other bush, about two or three feet from the ground; often in a currant or raspberry bush, of the fruit of which the bird is very fond. The eggs are usually four or five in number, of a pale greenish white, mottled with light brown and grey, with a few spots and streaks of dark brown. They have been found of a beautiful flesh or salmon-colour: the size varies considerably.

The Blackcap she builds in the raspberry bush,
 And a snug little nest she makes:
 And sweetly her mate singeth near her—hush!
 To those musical trills and shakes!
 He has caught from the Blackbird his rich mellow tone,
 From the Skylark the melody shrill;
 And the notes of the Woodlark, the Thrush, and his own
 He varies and blends at will.

GARDEN WARBLER.

FAUVETTE. GARDEN FAUVET. GREATER PETTYCHAPS.
 NETTLE-CREEPER.

FIGURE 23.

SCIENTIFIC name, *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia hortensis*, from *Hortus*, a garden or orchard, such places being the chief haunts of this sweet warbler, whose musical powers are nearly equal to those of the Blackcap. It is a small plain bird of retiring habits, and therefore attracts but little attention. It may be found by those who search for it, in the groves, gardens, thickets, and plantations all through the country, from the end of April to the end of August.

Its nest is loosely constructed of coarse grass, sometimes

intermixed with wool and grass, and lined with fine fibrous roots and hairs. The German naturalist Bechstein, says, that in his country, the opening of the nest has a border of spiders' web, or silk from the cocoon of some insect; and Mr. Morris states that these substances are used here to attach the structure to the branches amid which it is built. The bird sometimes builds on the ground, among tall grass or nettles, hence the name Nettle creeper; sometimes in a thick low bush, or among ivy stems against a wall, in which situation Mr. Jesse observed a pair of these birds to build three times in succession. The eggs are from four to six in number, nine-twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad; the colour a dull greenish white, dotted with light brown and grey.

The Garden Warbler generally rears two broods in a season; it lives chiefly on insects and worms, and soft pulpy fruit like cherries, of which it is extremely fond.

WHITETHROAT.

GREATER WHITETHROAT. PEGGY WHITETHROAT. NETTLE-CREEPER.

WHEEY BEARD. WHEETIE-WHY. CHURR. MUFF.

MUFFIT. MUFTIE. CHARLIE MUFTIE. BEARDIE. WHEATIE.

WHISKEY. BLEATHERING TAM.

FIGURE 24.

HERE is a choice of names, many of them more expressive than elegant. We cannot doubt by the sound of some of them that the bird is well known in Scotland, as it appears to be throughout nearly the whole of Britain. It is perhaps the commonest of the Warblers, and is called by naturalists *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia cinerea*, from the prevailing tint of the plumage; *cinerea*, in Latin, signifying ash-coloured. The Whitethroat, which arrives in this country in April, and leaves it in September, frequents hedges, the outskirts of plantations, and borders of woods, and any grounds where there are thickets and brushwood, amid which it likes to build.

Its nest is wide, and loosely, yet strongly made, of dry

grass-stalks and other plants, and lined with fine grass and hair. The eggs are four or five in number, of a greenish white ground colour, with spots and speckles of greenish grey and brown. Two, and sometimes three, broods are reared in a season. Although generally very careful to conceal its nest, the bird has been known to build in exposed situations, close to a public road, or an occupied dwelling. Mr. Jesse mentions one which built on a vine close to a window. Insects, worms, slugs, and soft fruit are the food of this bird, which Macgillivray calls the White-throated Warbler.

WOOD WARBLER, OR WREN.

YELLOW WARBLER. YELLOW WILLOW WREN. LARGER WILLOW WREN.
GREEN WREN. WILLIE MUFTIE.

FIGURE 25.

Motacilla, or *Sylvia sylvicola* is the scientific name of this elegant and interesting bird, as Sweet well terms it: the generic name comes from the Latin words *Sylva*, a wood, and *colo*, to inhabit. The French call the bird *Bec-fin sifflear*, from *siffler*, to hiss, whistle, or warble. This is a more gaily-tinted bird than most of the Warblers, having a considerable quantity of yellow and green about its plumage. Its period of arrival in this country is from the middle of April to the middle of May, and of departure therefrom about the end of September. It is not a very uncommon bird, although there are some parts of the country where it is rarely or ever seen. It inhabits woods, thickets, and gardens, and seems to prefer the neighbourhood of trees of large size.

It builds a domed nest of an oval shape, with a small hole in the side for entrance, neatly interwoven with grasses, leaves, and moss, and lined with fine grass and hair; it is generally placed on the ground, and well concealed by thick herbage. Mr. Sweet has found it in the stump of a tree. The eggs are six or seven in number; eight-twelfths of an inch long, by six-twelfths broad. The ground colour is white, thickly spotted and speckled with purple, red, and grey.

This is entirely an insectivorous bird. It is very active, and has a sharp shrill cry, resembling *tzit-tzit!* hence some naturalists call it *Sylvia sibillatrix*, from the Latin *sibilo*, to hiss: hence, too, our English word sibilous.

WILLOW WARBLER, OR WREN.

GROUND WREN. HAY BIRD. HUCK-MUCK. WILLIE MUFTIE.

FIGURE 26.

SCIENTIFIC name, *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia trochilus*, from *Sylva*, a wood, and *trochilus*, a Wren. This is a somewhat commoner bird than the last, and is one of our earliest summer visitants, generally arriving about the second week in April. Its favourite places of resort are the borders of streams, where osiers, alders, and willows best flourish; it is also frequently found in gardens, and all kinds of thick bushy places, especially where insects, its chief food, are most abundant. It builds a large nest for its size, generally of a flattish oval form, but varying considerably in shape, according to the situation chosen. The component materials are—outwardly, moss, fern, feathers, and grass; inwardly, feathers and hair; it is pretty closely woven, and the entrance is usually at the side.

The eggs, six or seven in number, are of a roundish form; in length, seven lines and a half; in breadth, six lines. The colour varies considerably, but is most commonly a pinkish white, with numerous small specks of pale rusty red. Purely white eggs have been met with in the nest of this bird, which is generally placed on the ground, and carefully concealed among long grass, brushwood, or rank weeds: it is often to be found in a bank, beneath a thick hedge, near a wood. The first brood of young are hatched by the end of May or the beginning of June; the second early in August.

CHIFF CHAFF.

LESSER PETTYCHAPS. LEAST WILLOW WREN. CHIP-CHOP.
HAY BIRD. ARBOUR BIRD.

FIGURE 27.

THIS bird bears a very close resemblance to the Willow Warbler; it is however somewhat smaller, and the wings are more rounded; hence it is sometimes called the Short-winged Wood Wren, by which name Macgillivray distinguishes it. Its most common title is derived from its curious, but not unpleasing song, of *chiff-chaff*, *chivy-chavy*; which it utters while on the wing, in pursuit of insects—its principal food. Bechstein calls it the Arbour Bird, perhaps because it prefers to build in thick leafy places. The French naturalist, Temminck, terms it *Sylvia rufa*—one would think from *rufus*, red, but the bird has little or no tinge of that colour about its plumage. *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia hippolais* is the more common scientific name; the last word has been translated, “a bird called a Hedge Sparrow.” *Bec-fin veloce* is a French name for this bird, signifying swift—rapid.

The nest of the Chiff Chaff is very like that of the Willow Warbler, of an oval shape, with the entrance generally at the side. It is composed of various materials, but chiefly of dried grass, moss, and dead leaves, and lined with feathers. The eggs are commonly six or seven in number; seven-twelfths of an inch long, by five and a half broad; the ground colour is white, with very small dots and spots of purplish red or brown. There are sometimes two broods in the year.

“Chiff-chaff! Chivy-chavy!”

What a funny little bird;
Was there ever such a warble
In the woodland heard?

“Chiff-chaff! Chivy-chavy!”

On the ear it comes again,
Faint and low, yet soft and pleasant
Is the gentle strain.

WREN.

COMMON WREN. JENNY WREN. KITTY WREN. JIMPO.

FIGURE 28.

EVERYBODY knows the pert little Jenny Wren, with her short cocked-up tail and sharp prying eyes; in and out of the thicket she flits, up and down the garden walk, and over the old wall and back again, with surprising swiftness; now picking a spider out of the crevice; now snatching a slug from the earth; now feasting on seeds in the field; and now on fruit in the orchard. She is here, and there, and everywhere, and she has a sweet song of her own, too, full and melodious, and astonishingly loud for such a little bird. Generally when on the wing, or hopping about from place to place, she utters a short sharp *chit-chit!* and have you ever seen her run up a tree? not straight like a Woodpecker, but twisting round it corkscrew fashion. Oh, she is a clever little climber, that Jenny Wren! and she builds a nest big enough one would suppose for two or three families diminutive as hers; large and round like a ball, with a hole on one side. It is made of almost anything that comes to hand—fern and moss, grass, and small roots, twigs and hay are all pressed into the service for the outer materials, but for the lining feathers are used—soft and warm for the little Wrenlings to lie upon.

The situations chosen for building, vary as much as the materials used; sometimes it is a hole in the earth; hence the scientific name of the bird, *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia troglodytes*, the last word being the name of a race of people who live in holes or caves; sometimes it is placed against the trunk of a tree at a considerable height from the ground; sometimes under a bank; and in any case where the nest has to be supported at the side or above, the portion to be attached to the supporting object is begun first, and the rest of the fabric traced out, as it were. Most birds build from the bottom of the nest, but the Wren, so Rennie tells us, sometimes departs from this rule, and seems to exercise a discretionary power which approaches very near to reason.

The following anecdote, taken from a very delightful book, called "A Journal of a Naturalist," by Knapp, will place the sagacity of the Wren in a yet stronger light:—"The bird had formed a hollow space in the thatch on the inside of my cowshed, in which it had placed its nest by the side of a rafter, and finished it with its usual neatness; but, lest the orifice of its cell should engage attention, it had negligently hung a piece of moss on the straw work, concealing the entrance, and apparently proceeding from the rafter; and so perfect was the deception, that I should not have noticed it, though tolerably observant of such things, had not the bird betrayed her secret by darting out.

To shew what curious places the Wren sometimes chooses for her nest, we may mention that Bechstein speaks of one which he found in the sleeve of an old coat. The eggs of this bird are generally of a white colour, dotted with light red; eight-twelfths of an inch long, six-twelfths broad; they are frequently as many as eight in number, and how this small bird could manage to feed such a company of young, has been a subject of surprise. An old naturalist named Ray, ranks it among "those daily miracles of which we take no notice." Wrens remain in this country the whole year through, and in severe winters many of them perish. Bishop Mant, in his poetical description of the British months, speaks of

"The quick note of the russet Wren,
Familiar to the haunts of men,
He quits in hollow'd wall his bow'r,
And thro' the winter's gloomy hour
Sings cheerily: nor yet hath lost
His blithness, chill'd by pinching
frost;
Nor yet is forc'd for warmth to cleave

To cavern'd nook, or straw-built eave.
Sing, little bird! Sing on, design'd
A lesson for our anxious kind;
That we, like thee, with heart's
content,
Enjoy the blessings God hath sent;
His bounty trust, perform his will,
Nor antedate uncertain ill!"

The poet Wordsworth tells us that—

"Among the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest, with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare."

GOLDCREST.

GOLDEN-CRESTED, OR CROWNED WREN.

GOLDEN-CRESTED, OR CROWNED KINGLET. MARYOLD FINCH.

TIDLEY GOLDFINCH.

FIGURE 29.

THIS is the tiniest of British, and indeed of European birds, measuring not more than three inches and a half long, with the tail, which is about one inch and a quarter, so there is not much left for the body. Some naturalists call it *Regulus cristatus*, which is as much as to say, a little king with a crest; others *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia Regulus*; and others again, *Regulus auricapillus*, or *vulgaris*; *aurum* in Latin means gold, *vulgaris* common; and this understood, the reason of these terms will be evident.

The lovely little Golderest may be found all over this kingdom, and all the year through, but then he must be sought for generally in the dim woods and leafy thickets, where much of the bright sunshine cannot enter; and a pretty sight it is to see him darting about here and there in search of insects, his golden crest glittering like a speck of light. Sometimes he ventures out into the open heaths among the furze bushes, and now and then may be seen flitting amid the rose trees and shrubs of the garden. His song, although very sweet, is low and weak; and his common call-note resembles the syllables *tzitt, tzitt*, uttered quickly; this is most frequently heard towards sunset, as if he were warning his friends of the approach of night.

He makes the prettiest little round nest imaginable, of moss and lichens, willow-down, spiders' webs, wool, fine grass, and hair. I do not mean to say that he uses all these materials at once, but he does use which ever of them comes most readily to hand; and he weaves the nest very closely, and lines it with soft feathers, and hangs it like a cradle to be rocked to and fro by the wind, beneath the branch of a fir or some other tree, most usually choosing an evergreen, as he builds very early in the year, and would not find the necessary shelter in other kinds. And—would you think it?—the saucy

little Goldcrest is a thief; he has been known to watch the Chaffinch, and slyly to abstract a portion of the materials which that careful builder had collected for its own habitation.

But of all the funny little eggs that ever were seen, the Goldcrest's are the funniest; about as big as a good-sized pea, and often of the same shape; the colour is reddish, or brownish white of various shades; there they be, four, five, six, seven, eight, aye sometimes as many as ten of them; all snug and warm in the rocking nest. And when the young are hatched, has not the little Goldcrest a busy time of it then? Up and down, in and out they go, both father and mother, scarcely two minutes being suffered to elapse without one of them returning with a gnat, or a spider, or an ant's egg, or some such delicacy to that cradle full of noisy gaping bills.

And oh! what a courageous little bird is the Goldcrest! J. T. Wilkinson, of Walsham Hall, Suffolk, relates that on one occasion, when he ascended a fir tree in his orchard, to look at a nest of this bird, the hen, which was sitting, defended her charge with the utmost firmness and resolution, pecking and flying at the intruder's hand until he withdrew it. The same authority speaks of a pair of these birds which built their nest near the drawing-room window, and sat fast and hatched their young, notwithstanding the noise of the piano and other interruptions to which they were subjected. A hen Goldcrest is also spoken of by Col. Montagu, which would feed her young in a room, even when the nest was taken in the hand; this bird went and returned with food about thirty-six times in the hour, and worked away at this rate sixteen hours a-day. Here was prodigious labour for one little weak bird; here was prodigious destruction too, of insect life. Let us see, thirty-six times sixteen make five hundred and seventy-six. Such an industrious worker deserves a song, and he shall have one.

'Mid the shadow of the pines, flitting here and there,
Lo! the Golden-crested Wren glanceth through the air,
Like a fiery meteor, or a shooting star,
The tiniest of creatures that in the forests are.

Never still a moment—whisking to and fro—
Now amid the topmost boughs, now the roots below;
Now he perks his feathers up, now he twinkles his eye,
Now emits a warble low, now a short sharp cry.

Lo! the Golden-crested Wren, he's a happy bird,
 Dwelling 'mid the solitude, where the boughs are stirred
 By the gentle breezes, stealing in and out,
 He their tuneful whispers understands, no doubt.

Soft and solemn music he hath ever near,
 Like angelic voicings from a better sphere;
 Kind and tender greetings from his wedded love,
 And the gentle cooings of the Cushat Dove.

Hath he not the Magpie, and the laughing Jay,
 And the playful Squirrel—all to make him gay?
 Pleasant sights and perfumes—hath he not all these,
 And bright gleams of sunshine, breaking through the trees?

As the tufted pine cones sporteth he among,
 Cometh not the Wild-Bee murmuring a song,
 Where around his dwelling, tassels all of gold,
 Make it like a palace gorgeous to behold?

When the tempest riseth, and the winds roar loud,
 And the haughty pine trees unto earth are bowed,
 Lo! secure he lyeth in his feathered nest,
 Fearing nought of danger,—perfectly at rest.

Yes, he leads a pleasant life—doth the Crested Wren,
 Far away from noisy towns, and the haunts of men;
 If no duties bound me—were I free to roam—
 Gladly would I visit him, in his sylvan home.

GREAT TITMOUSE.

GREAT BLACK-HEADED TOMTIT. BLACK-CAP. OXEYE.

SIT-YE-DOWN.

FIGURE 30.

THIS bird may be termed the king of the genus *Parus*, or Tit family, of which we have several representatives in this country; it has sometimes been called the *Parus hortensis*, or Garden Tit, but to this distinction it is no more entitled than any other member of its family circle, as all the Tits are fond of seeds and buds, and therefore haunters of gardens. *Parus major*, the latter word signifying greater, is the scientific name applied by nearly all naturalists to the bird, which remains in this country all the year round. The name Oxeye, as well as Sit-ye-down, has reference, Mr. Morris conjectures, to its note bearing a supposed resemblance to these words; this is so

loud, that it may be heard at the distance of half a mile; it has also been likened to the sharpening of a saw.

The Great Tit wears a dress of yellow, and black, and blue, and white, something like that of a harlequin, and his actions correspond; no bird is perhaps so full of antics and strange manœuvres; it is in a state of incessant activity, and in its search after insect food assumes all manner of extraordinary positions; now hanging with its head downwards, now all awry, twisting and wriggling about like a winged snake, if there were such a thing, might be supposed to do. Up the trunk of the tree he runs, in and out among the branches, down the other side, peering into every hole and crevice; now dexterously extracting a spider from its cell, now a worm from the bud, and now a kernel from the nut; and now, to his shame be it spoken! with his strong sharp bill cracking the skull of some poor helpless little bird, and feasting on the brains of his victim.

The Great Tit is most frequently found in woods and thickets, near to gardens and cultivated lands; it is an early builder, and forms its nest of moss, feathers, leaves, and hair loosely put together; the place chosen is generally a hole in a tree or an old wall; sometimes the deserted nest of a Crow or Magpie is used; and the eggs, which vary in number from six to eleven, are of a pure white colour, irregularly spotted with reddish brown: they have been discovered, in a decayed tree, on the dust of the wood alone. This bird has been known to build in very curious places, such, for instance, as a pump, both used and unused, the place of exit and entrance being the orifice for the handle; far up among the rafters of a house; in a window-frame, the opening for the weight being the door-way; and in an inverted flower-pot.

The French call this bird *Grosse Mésange, ou Charbonnière*—the first word signifying great, the second Titmouse, the third collier, or coal merchant.

BLUE TIT.

BLUE CAP. BLUE BONNET. BLUE MOPE. NUN. TOMTIT.
BILLY-BITER. HICK-WALL.

FIGURE 31.

Who that has been accustomed to traverse the English woodlands, or to wander in the fields or roads near them, but has frequently paused to listen to the shrill *chicka, chicka, chicka, chee, chee*, of the *Parus cœruleus*, as naturalists generally agree to call the Blue Tit? and who that has caught a glimpse of the lively little bird, but has admired its beautiful plumage of cerulean tint, and agile movements, than which nothing can be more graceful and interesting. This is one of the commonest, as well as the prettiest of the Tit family. Everybody knows the little Tomtit, and everybody loves it, except the gardener, who looks upon it as his greatest enemy, because it has a habit of picking his buds to pieces—a bad habit certainly, but then Tom is looking for insects, many thousands of which he destroys, and thus prevents far more ravage and destruction in the garden than he himself commits.

The nest of the Blue Tit is composed of moss, grass, and wool, and lined with hair and feathers. The eggs are from six to ten or more in number; of a reddish white colour, irregularly spotted with light red; the size is seven-twelfths of an inch long, by six-twelfths broad. As many as eighteen eggs have been found in the nest of this bird, which is generally placed in situations similar to those occupied by the species last described, and sometimes in even more curious places.

Speaking of one which built in the hollow of a pump, Bishop Stanley says, "It happened that during the time of building, and laying the eggs, the pump had not been in use; and when again set going the female was sitting; and it was naturally supposed that the motion of the handle would drive her away; the young brood, however, were hatched safely without any other misfortune than the loss of a part of the tail of the sitting bird, which was rubbed off by the friction of the pump handle."

Mr. Hewitson relates that once when out on an entomological, that is insect-hunting, excursion, he broke to pieces the decayed stump of a tree, within which a Blue Tit was sitting upon fourteen eggs, on which she remained immoveable, until forcibly taken off. He also mentions a pair of these birds, which built their nest, hatched their eggs, and reared their young, ten in number, in an earthen bottle, through the neck of which, one inch in diameter, the birds had to pass in and out. The bottle was fifteen inches deep, and one is puzzled to imagine how the birds could manage to ascend through so narrow an aperture. The Irish naturalist, Thompson, mentions a similar case in an ornamental jar; and another is spoken of by a Mr. Poole, in which the male bird used to feed the female, while sitting, through the neck of the jar. But the strangest place of all for this, or any other bird to build in, was within the jaws of the skeleton of a man who had been executed for murder, and was hung in chains: this was a grim kind of habitation truly! but it had no terrors for the innocent birds.

When the nest of this bird is built in the trunk of a tree, great pains are taken by the little architect to hollow out first a convenient passage, and then an inner cavity for the nursery, and this is all as smoothly done as if by the hand of a skilful carpenter; it is said, too, that the chips are not left in a heap, as they would naturally fall close to the spot, but are scattered about, and some even carried to a considerable distance. An instance of this kind is related by Mr. Saul, in the "Zoologist," that gentleman having watched the proceedings of a pair of Blue Tits, while preparing the chamber for their young.

Nests of this bird, and others of similar habits, have been found in trees apparently sound when taken to the saw-pit to cut into planks: they must have been there a very long time, for the entrance passage to have grown up again, and become solid like the other wood. The Blue Tit frequently uses the same nest year after year; it has been known to do so for twelve successive years: we wonder what rent he paid to the landlord.

If, as is sometimes the case, two broods are reared in the same year, different nests are said to be invariably used. This is a bird of quality, and must have his spring and autumn residences, forsooth!

LONG-TAILED TIT.

LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE, PIE, MAG, OR MUFFLIN.

BOTTLE TIT, OR TOM. LONG TOM. LONG POD. MUM RUFFIN.

HUCK-MUCK. POKE PUDDING.

FIGURE 32.

A BEAUTIFUL bird, with a great string of ugly names, longer than its tail, which tail is almost as long as its whole body, and distinguishes it from the rest of the Tit family. This caudal appendage has moreover being laid hold of by naturalists, who have found it a convenient handle, and so called the bird *Parus caudatus*, meaning literally the Tit that has a tail, as if the other Tits had no tail at all, or none worth speaking of—a base libel this on the rest of the family.

The Muffin is in truth an extremely beautiful and interesting bird, with its snowy pate, throat, and breast, delicately shaded off into grey, with a faint red flush, which deepens as it spreads up the back, until it is lost in the glossy black of the neck, extending from thence on either side of the head to the bill in two broad streaks, that enclose the eye, and give the bird a peculiarly quaint and knowing look. Black and white are the wings and tail, looking like rich velvet, embroidered and edged with silver. Oh, it is a *very* beautiful bird; and such a lively fellow too; his long tail seems no hindrance to him at all; but he whisks about as the other Tits do—just as if he had not one to carry. What he does with it in that curious nest of his, shaped like a long bottle, one cannot imagine, unless he pokes it up through the hole near the top, which serves at once for door and window.

No other English bird builds such a nest as the Bottle Tit: what a huge affair it is; and the shape of it, how preposterous! It is generally from five to seven inches long, by three or four wide, and looks, hanging beneath the branch of a tree, or sticking close to the trunk, like a bundle of green or grey moss, that has grown there, or accumulated by accident; but peep inside, and see what a soft downy chamber it is—lined with feathers, aye, an inch thick, and quite waterproof: . somebody took the pains to count how many feathers there were in one of these nests, and found no less than two thou-

sand three hundred and seventy-nine. Pretty good work that for a pair of little birds to accomplish in a fortnight, when the bleak winds of March were whistling through the nearly naked woods. But it was a labour of love with them; and it is astonishing how much both birds and boys may do when their hearts is in the work.

Some naturalists have said that the nest of this bird has two openings, like a front and back door, but experience goes to prove the contrary; the cases are very rare in which such a construction has been observed. The moss and lichens of which the fabric is composed, are bound together, and fixed to the tree, by means of spiders' webs, and the silk spun by moths and butterflies; frequently small fragments of bark and pieces of wool are woven into it. The eggs are sometimes entirely white, but generally spotted a little with pale red. They are about the size of a pea, and vary in number from ten to twelve; as many as sixteen have been found in one nest, but this, it is supposed, was the produce of more than one pair of birds; instances have occurred of several pairs going shares in a single habitation.

Besides the three Tits which we have described, there are in this country four other species belonging to the Tit family; these are the Cole Tit, (*Parus ater*;) the Crested Tit, (*Parus cristatus*;) the Marsh Tit, (*Parus palustris*;) and the Bearded Tit, (*Parus barbatus*;) the last having a long tail like the Muffin, from which, however, it differs widely in the colour of its plumage, and in many other important particulars; it is often called the Least Butcher Bird, being thought by some naturalists to resemble the Shrikes more than the Tits. To each of these beautiful and lively birds, we should like to dedicate a song, but our limited space not permitting this, we must be content with one only, which must do for the whole family, to the most common member of which it is addressed:—

The little Tomtit! The little Tomtit!

What a joyous bird is he!

And he loveth about in the sun to flit,

And to perch on the orchard tree:

When the shining buds begin to peep,

With his sharp *tzit, tzit!* and his shrill *cheep, cheep!*

From morn till night 'tis his to keep,

As busy as busy can be.

The little Titmouse! The little Titmouse!
 What a comical fellow is he!
 With his head awry, and his half-closed eye,
 As much as to say—"I see;
 I see the maggot within the green bud;
 You cannot, although your sight may be good;
 I'm sharper than you, for I'm searching for food;
 And I'm hungry—very! *chee, chee!*"

The little Tomtit has a little black cap,
 And Oh, such a twinkling eye!
 And his tiny wings they go flip-flap,
 And he utters his shrill sharp cry;
 And he looks as proud as an eagle can,
 That sits on a rock the sun to scan;
 And he says to the gardener "Come, my man,
 We ought to be friends, you and I!"

But the gardener likes not the little Tomtit,
 For he sees the ground beneath
 With buds bestrewn, and he vows at noon,
 Ere night, to be his death.
 But surely this is a cruel speech,
 For a worm hath eaten the heart of each;
 If the fatal shot should the poor bird reach,
 'Tis the innocent suffereth.

PIED WAGTAIL.

WHITE, BLACK-AND-WHITE, WATER, OR WINTER WAGTAIL.

DISH-WASHER, PEGGY WASH-DISH.

FIGURE 33.

IN scientific language, this bird has been called *Motacilla Yarrellii*, after an English Naturalist named Yarrell; it appears to be the same species which Linnæus named *Motacilla alba*, or white; but as there is some doubt about this, we cannot positively assert it. A well-known bird to the country people of Great Britain generally, is the Peggy Wash-dish; so called we suppose, from its habit of frequenting the banks of running streams, and other watery places. It has a slender elegant shape, and a long tail, which it frequently flirts up in a very curious manner while hunting for insects in the mud, as if afraid of soiling it.

The Wagtail is a very active bird; it runs with great swift-

ness, and flies from place to place with short flights, which have a wave-like motion; it frequently turns and returns, as attracted here and there by the tiny winged creatures on which it chiefly feeds. It also hovers over the water, skims along the surface, and catches with great dexterity the minnows and other small inhabitants of the streams and ponds, to which however, the bird by no means confines itself, being frequently seen in the meadows and in the garden plots; sometimes in the rick-yard or on the house-top, hunting for flies. The name Wagtail is derived from a peculiar fanning motion of the tail which the bird makes as if to steady itself when it alights. Its note is little more than a short sweet twitter, which is uttered very frequently.

The nest is composed of stems of grass, leaves, and small roots, with a lining of wool, hair, and thistle-down, or feathers; it is loosely put together, and is placed in a great variety of situations; sometimes in a hole in a wall, or hollow of a tree; in a bank overhanging a stream, or under the parapet of a bridge; in the side of a hay, faggot, peat, or other stack; it has been found both in a grass and turnip field. Mr. Jesse tells of one built in a workshop of a manufactory at Taunton, near the wheel of a lathe, which was frequently in motion; the shop was occupied by braziers, and there in the midst of the din, sat the bird, and hatched and reared her young. In a quarry close by where men were working, and under the platform at the top of a coal-pit, with the trampling of feet overhead, and the jar of the coals drawn up from below, the parent Wagtails have been known to construct their nest, and lay their five or six light grey or yellowish white eggs, spotted with darker grey or brown, and measuring nine-twelfths of an inch long, and seven-twelfths and a quarter broad. They generally build about the middle of April, and sometimes rear two broods.

Peggy, Peggy wash-the-dish!
By the sandy bank she sits,
Or across the stream she flits,
Catching, now and then, a fish;
Living ever by her wits,
Who a merrier life could wish?

GREY WAGTAIL.

WINTER, OR YELLOW WAGTAIL.

FIGURE 34.

THIS is not so common a bird as the last, and therefore has not been honoured with such a variety of popular names. It is a very beautiful bird, the plumage of the breast and upper part of the tail being of a bright yellow, hence its scientific name, *Motacilla sulphureus*, that is, sulphur-coloured. The habits of this bird are much like those of the last; it is, however, somewhat more shy, and generally builds its nest on the ground, although, like its pied relative, it sometimes exhibits a curious taste in this matter, choosing at one time the hollow of a spout, at another the shelf of an outhouse, or the window-sill of a dairy, or the switches of a railway, within two or three inches of every passing train. The eggs are from five to eight in number, and usually of about the same size and colour as those of the pied species, like which too, they vary considerably in both these particulars.

The other Wagtails known in this country are the White Wagtail, thought by some to be but a variety of the pied species; the Grey-headed Wagtail, which naturalists call *Motacilla neglecta*, or the neglected; and the Yellow Wagtail, (*Motacilla flava*;) they are all much alike in their habits, and form a most interesting family group of birds.

“At hand,” says Bishop Mant, “I greet
The nimble Wagtail’s brisk *te-wheel!*”
But whether ’t is the Wagtail Grey,
Or Pied, the Bishop does not say.
Nor matters it, although it be
One other of the family;
For all are brisk, and full of glee,
And whether flitting in the sun,
Or here and there they nimbly run,
They are a pleasant sight to see.

TREE PIPIT.

PIPIT. FIELD, LESSER FIELD, MEADOW,
GRASSHOPPER, LESSER-CRESTED, SHORT-HEELED FIELD, OR
TREE LARK. FIELD TITLING.

FIGURE 35.

THIS is a migratory bird, arriving in England near the latter end of April, and leaving us again in September. Its food consists of flies, caterpillars, grasshoppers, worms, and small seeds. It has a sweet low warble of its own, with but little variety in it, something like *tzee, tzee, tzee*, often repeated. Some naturalists call the bird *Alauda trivialis*, the first word signifying a Lark, and the last the same as the English word trivial, that is, small, insignificant; others term it *Anthus arboreus*, that is, a little bird, or a Pipit, belonging to trees.

The nest of this bird is placed on the ground amid woods and plantations, generally sheltered by a tuft of grass, or the rank herbage of a hedge-row, or a flowery bank; Mr. Neville Wood found one fixed in the lower branches of a small thick bush. The materials used in the construction are mosses, with fibrous roots and dried grass; fine grass and a few leaves form the lining: it measures about three inches across, and the sides are about an inch in thickness. The eggs, four or five in number, are generally of a pale greyish colour, with a faint tinge of purple, and spots of purplish brown or red; the colour, however, varies greatly, as does also the size, the average of which appears to be seven-twelfths of an inch in length, by nine twelfths in breadth.

The Tree Pipit builds in a tuft of grass,
Surrounded by hedge-row flowers,
And his days of sunshine merrily pass,
Or there in woodland bowers:
And he stays not till winter strips the tree;
For the Pipit—a wise little bird is he!

MEADOW PIPIT.

TITLARK. TITLING. MEADOW TITLING. PIPIT, OR MEADOW LARK.
MOSS CHEEPER. GREY CHEEPER. LING BIRD.

FIGURE 36.

THIS is a more common bird than the last, and remaining with us the whole year through, is of course better known; for as adversity tries and shows the character of man, so does the season of cold and scarcity reveal most fully the habits and instincts of the wild creatures. Everywhere throughout Great Britain is to be found the *Anthus* or *Alanda pratensis*, the Meadow Pipit or Lark, and in all kinds of situations: hill or valley; marsh or moorland; shady woods, and meadows open to the sunshine, are alike the home and pleasure-grounds of this little olive brown bird, with the whitish speckled breast, and sharp restless eye. On the summits of the highest mountains; in the depths of the deepest valleys; on the sandy sea shore, and far inland, where the solemn sound of the rolling billows is never heard; in the near neighbourhood of busy towns, and away in the wilderness, where the foot of man seldom intrudes, amid the gorse, and the ling, and the purple heather, and the tall waving grasses, the Titlark sings its cheerful song, soft and musical, though, like its namesake of the tree, but little varied. *Peep-peep!* it goes, while hovering over its nest on the wing, or alighting with a gentle sweep on a low bush or a rail, where it stands awhile, flirting its tail about like a Wagtail *Peep-peep*, then *Peep-pit—Pipit*—as if calling its own name. If alarmed, it utters a sharp *tritz, tritz!* and flies off, sometimes with apparent effort, as if wounded, to entice the intruder from its nest, which is placed on, or close to, the ground, and is composed of dried grass, lined with finer grass and a few hairs; sometimes a little moss is used in the construction. The eggs are from four to six in number, and scarcely any two sets are exactly alike in colour; sometimes the ground tint is reddish brown or reddish white; sometimes a yellowish brown; and sometimes a pale blue or grey; in all cases they are mottled and marked with deeper brown, especially near the larger end: the average length is nine-twelfths of an inch; breadth seven-twelfths.

This bird shares with the Hedge Sparrow the honour, if such it may be called, of most frequently hatching and rearing the young of the Cuckoo. The Irish naturalist, Thompson, relates a remarkable instance of sagacity with reference to the Titlark, as the bird is perhaps most commonly called, which we ought to quote here. It is to the effect that a nest being found by some truant boys at the side of a drain in a field, was by them deprived of the grassy covering which concealed it. On visiting the spot the day after the occurrence, it was found that a quantity of withered grass had been laid regularly across the nest, so as completely to hide it; this was removed, and out flew the bird. On the next day again the grass was found similarly placed as before, and beneath it was a small aperture by which the little architect made her entrance and exit; she had clearly done her best to repair the mischief, and screen her nest from observation. Moss Cheeper is the name by which this bird is generally known in Ireland, the term having reference to the moss or peat covering the ground which it mostly inhabits, and also to its call note—*Cheep!* This name also applies to it in Scotland, and in some parts of Ireland it is called Wekeen, referring probably to the double ee sound of its note.

Besides the Meadow and Tree Pipits, which are frequently confounded, there are three other species of British birds which are commonly placed in the *Anthus* or Pipit genus: these are Richard's Pipit, (*Anthus Ricardi*,) a rare and beautiful bird, very like a Lark; the Red-throated Pipit, (*Anthus montanus*,) pertaining to mountains, also rare; and the Rock Pipit, (*Anthus aquaticus*,) from *aqua*, water, because it frequents watery places; this is by no means an uncommon bird, and also closely resembles the Larks, to which the Pipits are nearly allied.

The Mead Pipit tarries the whole year through,

Like a firm and steadfast friend;

When the gales are soft, and the skies are blue,

When the blasts are keen, and the black clouds bend

Over the earth; the bird is near,

With his cheerful note to gladden the ear.

SKY LARK.

LAVEROCK. FIELD, OR COMMON LARK.

FIGURE 37.

WHAT a striking proof is it of the goodness of the Great Creator of the universe, that everything which is most beautiful and loveable, and pleasing to the senses, is also common; the bright warm sunshine, the cool fresh breezes, the lovely shapes, the rich hues, and delicious perfume of flowers, and a hundred other sources of innocent enjoyment, are all common. Every day and every hour we may listen to the melody of birds, and, as the American poet says, may

“Go abroad, rejoicing in the joy
Of beautiful and well-created things.”

The woods are full of music, and there is nothing to pay for hearing it, for it is common to all; the streams that glide sparkling in the sunshine, every thirsty lip may drink of them; and the daisies and buttercups—nature’s gold and silver—every child may gather them, and grow rich with the treasures of the earth. And up in the air there sings the Lark—sings all over the land, and all day long, and a great part of the year through, the commonest of feathered songsters, and perhaps the very sweetest; at all events the most cheerful and gladsome of any. Let my young readers, then, never despise common things, for as we said before, they are the most beautiful and loveable.

This Sky Lark, now—this *Alauda arvensis*, or Lark of the Fields, as the naturalists call it—up he springs, while the morning dew lies fresh upon the grass, and he soars and sings “as if he had learned music and motion from an angel,” so says one of our old divines, named Jeremy Taylor, and we only wish we had space to repeat to our readers one-tenth, or one-hundredth, part of the beautiful things that have been said and sung about this plain little sober-coloured *common* bird, the Sky Lark, which builds its nest upon the ground in the corn or the hay field, or in the open pasture; just a little withered

grass loosely put together, and lined with some finer fibres, placed in a hollow, and but slightly shrouded from observation, containing four or five eggs of a greenish grey colour, freckled over with light brown; some ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, by eight and a half broad; and if these are not crushed by the careless foot, or broken by the mower's scythe, or taken to be threaded on a string by the truant schoolboy—shame upon him for the deed!—out of them will come in due time, a choir of songsters that will one day sing at Heaven's gate, as Shakspeare has it, and fill the air with melody.

But let not my readers think that the Lark is sent upon earth only to please the ear: from every object in nature, even the most dull and inanimate, high and holy lessons are to be learned; and this bird has been especially dwelt on by poets and moralists as one that teaches many such lessons as a pious and humble mind would gladly receive. Thus Young, in his "Night Thoughts," tells us that—

"Pride, like the Eagle, builds among the clouds,
While pleasure, Lark-like, nests upon the ground."

And James Montgomery, classing together the two sweetest feathered songsters, says—

"The bird that soars on highest wing,
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest;
In Lark and Nightingale we see
What honour and humility."

The Sky Lark generally rears two broods in the year, the young of the first being fledged by about the end of June, and the second late in August, or early in September. It is related by Mr Blyth that on one occasion, when some mowers had shaven off the top of the nest of this bird, without injuring the parent, she sat fast while they levelled the grass around her, and in about an hour afterwards it was found that she had constructed a dome of grass over the nest, leaving an aperture on one side for ingress and egress. Several instances are upon record of the Sky Lark's having moved: its eggs and young to a safer spot, when danger threatened them, the long

claws of the bird enabling it to do this without much apparent difficulty.

Any one who has noticed the upward flight of the Lark has observed that it ascends spirally, that is, as if it were following the windings of an invisible corkscrew; up it goes, soaring and singing, until it becomes a mere speck in the air where the dazzled eye can scarcely follow it, and if we were to search the ground, in a direct line beneath this musical mote in the sun, it is likely that the nest might be found, with the hen bird sitting upon it, listening to the voice of her mate, who will presently come down straight, as if drawn by a string, to that home of love and happiness so well described by the Scottish poet Grahame:—

“On tree, or bush, no Lark is ever seen:
The daisied lea he loves, where tufts of grass
Luxuriant crown the ridge; there, with his mate,
He founds their lowly house of withered bents,
And coarsest speargrass; next, the inner work
With finer, and still finer fibres lays,
Rounding it curious with his speckled breast.
How strange this untaught art! it is the gift,
The gift innate of Him, without whose will,
Not even a sparrow falleth to the ground.”

WOOD LARK.

FIGURE 38.

THIS is the *Alauda arborea* of most naturalists; the *Alouette lulu* of the French, so called, we are told, from a singularly mournful cry which it utters in winter, resembling the syllables *lu-lu* long drawn out: the meaning of the Latin phrases our readers will understand, having had them before explained. *Alouette* is the French for Lark. This bird is a very sweet songster, but it chiefly sings in retired, woody places, and has a plaintive, rather than a loud song. It is not nearly so plentiful as the Sky Lark, and in some parts of the country is not found at all.

It builds its nest on the ground, beneath a bush, or behind a tuft of grass, of the same materials as its soaring relative,

with the addition of a little hair, and lays four or five eggs of a pale greenish white ground, spotted and speckled with dull reddish brown: they are nine-twelfths of an inch long, by seven-twelfths broad. April and July appear to be the most usual months when the eggs are laid, there being frequently two broods in the year. Mudie thinks that the reason why Wood Larks are not so numerous, in proportion to the number of eggs laid, as most other species, is that they build in so inclement a season, and on barren exposed places, so that they are frequently destroyed.

BUNTING.

COMMON, OR CORN BUNTING. BUNTING LARK.

FIGURE 39.

THE Buntings form a sort of connecting link between the Larks and Finches; they are strong, hardy birds, with no great powers of song, and feed upon insects, seeds, and grain. Naturalists have placed them in a family group, under the generic term *Emberiza*: the specific name of the Common Bunting is *miliaria*, because it feeds much upon millet. It is found in most parts of this country, and in the Scottish Islands is generally called the Sparrow. Its note is harsh and unmusical, consisting of the syllables *chack*, *chit*, uttered rapidly. Flocks of these birds congregate in the winter about the stack-yards, and help themselves freely from the corn ricks.

They generally build their nest in April, placing it on the ground, or but slightly elevated above it, amid long grass, or in a low bush, or beneath a bank. It is composed of small roots, straws, and grasses, and lined with the finer parts of the same materials, with some moss and hair: it is large, thick, and somewhat shallow, tolerably neat in appearance, although by no means closely woven.

The eggs are generally four in number, rarely five or six; they are of a blunt oval shape; ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, by about eight-twelfths broad; the ground colour is usually greyish white, streaked and spotted with purple and brown of various shades.

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

RING, REED, OR PASSERINE BUNTING.

REED, WATER, OR MOUNTAIN SPARROW. RING BIRD, OR FOWL.

BLACK BONNET. CHINK.

FIGURE 40.

THE scientific name of this bird is *Emberiza schoeniclus*, the latter term meaning a water-bird, probably, says Mr. Morris, from *scoinus*, a rush. This, and several of its popular names, point out the situations in which we are to look for the Black Bonnet, and we find in the latter term a sufficiently evident mark of distinction. Ring Bird refers, we suppose, to the white ring round the neck, which in the cock, for the hen has a brown pate, contrasts beautifully with the glossy black covering the top and sides of the head. This Bunting is by no means an uncommon bird here, and it may sometimes be seen far away from the streams and marshy places, which it commonly frequents, and where its nest is usually placed on the ground, among coarse grass, weeds, sedge, or rushes; sometimes it may be found in a furze, or gorse bush, at a considerable distance from the water; and it has been discovered, though not often, supported on a mass of matted reeds, just over the water, at an elevation of, perhaps, two feet or so.

The nest is composed of grass and fragments of rushes, lined with the down of the reed, a little moss, fine grass, or hair. The eggs are four or five in number, of a pale purplish, greenish, or brownish white, agreeably spotted with a darker shade of the same; they are of a longish oval form, tapering off finely at each end; they are nine and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven and a half broad, and are generally laid about the first week in May: a second brood is sometimes produced in July.

Mr. Salmon, of Thetford, a contributor to "The Magazine of Natural History," relates that, walking in the spring of the year among some rushes, growing by a river, his attention was arrested by observing a Black-headed Bunting shuffling through the rushes, and trailing along the ground, as if one of her legs or wings was broken. He followed her to see the result,

and the bird having led him to some considerable distance, took wing; no doubt much rejoiced to find her stratagem had been successful in preserving her brood, consisting of five young ones, which he afterwards found by the side of a clump of grass, which almost screened it from view. This artifice is frequently resorted to by birds to lead intruders from their nests. Several such instances are mentioned in our little work, and many more might be quoted to shew the care and solicitude of the feathered creatures for the safety of their young. There is no prettier sight in nature than to watch the Black-headed Buntings flitting about among the slender reeds and velvet-headed rushes, which bend and sway too and fro as the birds cling to them, and open and shut the feathers of their tails quickly, so that the white portions flash upon the view for a moment like a gleam of light, and are gone again.

YELLOW-HAMMER.

YELLOW BUNTING. YELLOW YELDRING, YOLDING, OR YOWLEY.
YELLOW YELDRICK, YOLKING, YOIT, OR YITE. SKITE. DEVIL'S BIRD.

FIGURE 41.

WE have already seen that there is some very ugly names applied to very pretty birds, but surely our beautiful and well-known Yellow-hammer has the ugliest of all: what could possess people to load it with such a string of harsh and disagreeable epithets? The scientific name of the bird is soft and pleasing enough—*Emberzia citrinella*; it glides out of the mouth without any effort, and falls upon the ear with a musical cadence; not so, however, does the note of our golden-plumed friend—a harsh *chit, chit, chirr*, gradually ascending, until it becomes quite a shriek. In Scotland it has been translated into *Deil, Deil, Deil take ye!* addressed, it is supposed, to those who plunder the bird of its eggs or young; and hence the most disagreeable of the above names. We are not learned in bird language, but hardly think this can be the right rendering; such language could never surely come

out of an innocent bird's beak, however much excited by rage or sorrow.

Yellow-hammers we have all seen, and all admired; there is not a road-side hedge, along which you can walk, but out of it one or a pair of them will occasionally fly; and the nest, you may be sure, is not far off. It is rather a bulky affair, somewhat loosely built of moss, small twigs, roots, and hair—the finer materials forming the lining; it is placed on a bank, beneath a bush, or in a clump of grass. The eggs are of a pale purplish white colour, streaked and speckled with dark reddish brown; that is, generally, for they vary considerably, having been found of a pale stone-colour, and even white, with delicate markings, like fine marble. They are in length about ten-twelfths of an inch; in breadth, eight-twelfths; in number, four or five, occasionally six. The young are seldom able to fly before the second week in June: two broods are sometimes reared.

Mr. Thompson relates that in the garden of a friend of his near Belfast, a pair of these birds built their nest at the edge of a gravel walk, and hatched four young ones, three of which were destroyed; when the nest being removed to a place of greater safety, the old birds still kept to it, until their last nestling was able to fly. Mr. Salmon found one of these nests at the height of seven feet from the ground, in a broom tree; and Mr. Hewitson another at the height of six feet in a spruce fir. Grain, and the seeds of grasses and other plants form the principal food of this bird, whose specific name *citrinella*, is derived from *citrus*, a citron or lemon tree, probably on account of the colour of its plumage.

The other Buntings known in this country are the Snow Bunting, (*Emberiza nivalis*,) a very beautiful bird, found chiefly in the north; the Lapland Bunting, or Finch, (*E. lapponica*,) an extremely rare species with us; the Cirl Bunting, (*E. cirrus*,) distinguished by its black throat, also rare; and the Ortolan Bunting, (*E. hortulana*,) from *hortus*, a garden, a bird with orange tawny breast, of which only a few specimens have been taken in Great Britain. It is thus that Clare describes the nest of the Yellow-hammer:—

"Just by the wooden bridge a bird flew up,
 Scared by the cow-boy as he scrambled down
 To reach the misty dewberry.—Let us stoop
 And seek its nest. The brook we need not dread—
 'Tis scarcely deep enough a bee to drown,
 As it sings harmless o'er its pebbly bed.
 —Aye, here it is! stuck close beside the bank,
 Beneath the bunch of grass, that spindles rank
 Its husk-seeds tall and high:—'t is rudely planned
 Of bleached stubbles, and the withered fare
 That last year's harvest left upon the land,—
 Lined thinly with the horses' sable hair.
 Five eggs, pen scribbled o'er with ink their shells,
 Resembling writing-scrolls, which Fancy reads
 As Nature's poesy and Pastoral spells—
 They are the Yellow-hammer's, and she dwells,
 Most poet-like, 'mid brooks and flowery weeds."

CHAFFINCH.

SHILFA. SCOBby. SHELly. SKELly.

SHELL-APPLE. CHAFFY. BOLDIE. TWINK. SPINK. PINK. FINK,
BEECH, AND HORSE-DUNG FINCH.

FIGURE 42.

HERE again we have a long array of names, some of them sounding very like terms of endearment, for which they were, no doubt, intended; some of reproach; several of them have reference to the various call-notes which the bird utters, one of these being a shrill *fink*, *fink!* another a more low and somewhat lingering *treef*, *treef*. Shilfa is a term more used in Scotland than elsewhere; and other of the names are employed only in certain localities. Naturalists call the Chaffinch *Fringilla cœlebs*, meaning a Finch that is a bachelor, because, they say, that during a part of the year the male birds leave the hens, and live altogether apart from them. This bird is not naturally a brilliant songster, although it is a very sweet one; yet by a careful system of training it may be made almost to rival the Canary, and others of the best feathered musicians of the cage and aviary. In Germany, from whence we get the greater part of our well-trained song birds, there

are regular schools where Chaffinches are systematically taught.

The Chaffinch is in every way a neat and handsome bird, well dressed, and well proportioned—a very pink of a bird; this, perhaps, is the reason why he is sometimes called a Pink; and, like most of the Finches, he is, too, a very neat builder. A Chaffinch's nest, built under favourable circumstances, is a perfect model of what a bird's nest should be,—round and compact, and closely woven, without any loose ragged material sticking about it, to spoil the uniformity of the clear outline. It is generally composed of moss, interspersed with various coloured lichens, so as best to accord in colour with the situation in which it is placed; sometimes grasses, stalks of plants, and small roots are used; sometimes the lining is wool; at others, hair or feathers, thistle-down or spiders' webs, or, in short, any suitable substance which comes readily to hand, or claw and beak, as we should rather say. But whatever the material may be, the little architect is sure to work it in neatly, and make a good job of it. The situations chosen for building are as various as the materials; sometimes the nest is fixed in a bush, or a hedge-row, or between the branches of a fruit tree, especially one which is trained up a wall, between which and the tree the nest is generally placed.

A correspondent of "The Field Naturalist's Magazine," relates that a pair of Chaffinches built in a shrub so close to the window of his sitting-room, that he could observe their operations. The foundation of the nest was laid on the 12th. of April; the female only worked at it, and by great diligence the beautiful structure was finished in three weeks. The first egg was deposited on the 2nd. of May; four others were afterwards added, and the whole five were hatched on the 15th. During the time of sitting the male often visited his partner, but it was not observed that he brought her food; she sat steadily and patiently, quite undisturbed, as it appeared, by the constant observation to which she was subjected from the open window.

A gentleman, who writes to the editor of the "Zoologist," says, "One of the oddest circumstances that I can recollect about birds is, that a pair of Chaffinches annually built their nest in an old pear tree, and placed it upon a branch, over-

hanging a walk, so low, that it was often struck by the heads of passengers;" and this reminds us that the Shell-apple, as the bird is called from this circumstance, is very fond of picking to pieces the buds of the pear and apple trees, no doubt like the Tomtit, for the sake of the insects which he finds therein. The Chaffinch's eggs are in shape a well-formed oval, nine-twelfths of an inch long, by six broad; the colour is usually a dull bluish green, clouded with dusky red, the two tints sometimes running into each other.

Grahame gives us a pretty picture of this bird in its woodland retreat, which we are tempted to set before our readers.

"At such a still and sultry hour as this,
When not a strain is heard through all the woods,
I've seen the SHILFA light from off his perch,
And hop into a shallow of the stream,
Then, half afraid, flit to the shore, then in
Again alight, and dip his rosy breast
And fluttering wings, while dew-like globules coursed
The plumage of his brown-empurpled back.
The barefoot boy, who, on some slaty stone,
Almost too hot for touch, has watching stood,
Now thinks the well-drenched prize his own,
And rushes forward;—quick, though wet, the wing
Gains the first branches of some neighbouring tree,
And baulks the upward gazing hopeless eye.
The ruffling plumes are shook, the pens are trimmed,
And full and clear the sprightly ditty rings,
Cheering the brooding dam: she sits concealed
Within the nest deep-hollowed, well disguised
With lichens grey, and mosses gradual blent,
As if it were a knurle in the bough."

SPARROW.

COMMON, HOUSE, OR DOMESTIC SPARROW.

FIGURE 43.

THIS very commonest of common birds must be well known to all our readers. A bold familiar bird, he hops about our path, both in summer and winter, and takes, without waiting for an invitation, a share of whatever he finds eatable. We cannot feed our pigs, or our fowls, or our pigeons, but we feed the Sparrows also, and their chirpings are never out of our

ears; neither should the thought be out of our minds that He who, as the Scripture tells us, feeds the Ravens, and suffers not a Sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed, is ever near to mark our doings, and to punish or reward us according to our desert.

Every idle nest-pilferer knows the colour of the Sparrow's eggs, and where they may be found; but as we trust that we are not addressing such, we think it well to give some slight description of them. The colour of the eggs generally is a dull light grey, much spotted and streaked all over with ash-colour and dusky brown; these markings vary greatly in different eggs, but a general resemblance may be traced: ten-twelfths of an inch long by seven-twelfths broad is the average size. The nest is rather bulky, composed of straw, grass, leaves, twigs, and the like, with a lining of hair, wool, or feathers; it is not very neatly put together, and is placed in some elevated position, in any convenient cavity, such as a hole or crevice in a wall, an orifice in an old water-pipe, a space beneath the eaves of tiles or thatch. Five or six is the usual number of eggs, and three broods are often reared in one season. Were not the Sparrow so prolific a bird, one would think that it would long since have become extinct, for constant war is waged against it, and truly a price is set upon its head, under the impression, as we think a mistaken one, that it is a most mischievous bird to the husbandman and the gardener. That Sparrows consume a considerable quantity of grain and seeds, and do some injury to the fruit, we do not mean to deny, but there is plenty of evidence to prove that they also destroy an immense number of destructive insects, sufficient at least to balance the account which man has against them, if not to make him considerably their debtor.

This question has been repeatedly argued; and among others, Mr. Hawley, of Doncaster, has taken up the cudgels in defence of our persecuted chirper of the house-top. In the "Zoologist," he thus states the case:—"I have watched pairs of Sparrows repeatedly feeding their young, and have found that they bring food to their nest once in ten minutes during at least six hours of the twenty-four, and that each time from two to six caterpillars are brought. Now, suppose that the 'three thousand five hundred Sparrows' destroyed by the 'Association

for killing Sparrows' were to have been alive the next spring, each pair to have built a nest, and reared successive broods of young, during three months, we have, at the rate of two hundred and fifty thousand per day, the enormous multitude of twenty-one millions and sixty-eight thousand larvæ prevented from destroying the products of the land, and from increasing their number from fifty to five hundred fold."

It seems then, after all, that the sadly-maligned Sparrow is a bird more sinned against than sinning. Many very curious anecdotes illustrative of the sagacity and other remarkable qualities of the Sparrow are related by naturalists, and especially in Mr. Morris's "History of British Birds" do we find such results of a close observation of the habits and manners of the *Fringilla* or *Passer domestica* given at great length.

"Who killed Cock Robin?
'I,' said the Sparrow,
'With my bow and arrow,
And I killed Cock Robin.'"

This is a stigma upon the character of our feathered friend which ought to be removed. Putting out of sight the absurdity of supposing him capable of using a bow at all, we may remark that Cock Robin is a much more fierce and quarrelsome bird, and, to say the least, as likely to kill, as he killed by, the Sparrow, which is a spirited bird, too, when there is occasion for the display of valour.

Among the curious places chosen by the Sparrow to build, we may mention the lion's mouth over Northumberland House, at Charing Cross, London; but London Sparrows are such desperately impudent birds; they seem to care for nothing. Amid the carved foliage of the stately Corinthian column, or behind the projections of the fretted frieze-work of the royal palace, even, do these dingy denizens of the smoky city make their habitation, and chirp away as noisily as in the straw-built thatch. Beneath the roof that covers "the collective wisdom of the nation," as the English Parliament is called, or above the grand door-way of that noble old Abbey of Westminster, close by, there are the Sparrows chittering and chattering, and quarrelling about the possession of an angel's wing, or a grim demonical face for a roosting-place.

GREENFINCH.

GREEN LINNET. GREEN GROSBEEK.

FIGURE 44.

Fringilla, or *Coccothraustes chloris* is the scientific name of this bird; the first term meaning a Finch; the second being derived from *coccus*, a berry, and *thrauö*, to break; and the last signifying light green, properly the colour of young grass,—in allusion to the prevailing tint of the plumage of the bird, which, like all the Finches, is handsome and stoutly built. It is by no means uncommon in this country, where it continues all the year round, collecting into flocks in the winter, and resorting to the farm-yards for the sake of the grain stored there.

The Greenfinches generally begin to build in April: a completed nest has been found as early as March 26th. Small roots, twigs, moss, and straws form the outer materials, and the same of finer texture, with thistle-down, feathers, and hair, the inner. The building-sites selected are various—sometimes it is a low bush, or an evergreen; sometimes the ivy against a wall; and not unfrequently the forked branches of a fruit tree, whose buds are sure to undergo a careful examination for spiders lurking within. The eggs, from four to seven in number, are of a bluish or reddish white, spotted with purple, grey, and dark brown; some are much more covered with markings than others; they are nearly eleven-twelfths of an inch long, and about eight broad, and taper considerably at one end. According to Neville Wood, this bird pays remarkable attention to its young, and if they are taken, flutters about the hand of the person who does the mischief, and strives to prevent it. One of its favourite nesting places, if Bishop Mant is correct, is a pine tree: he says,

“A cradle for the Greenbird’s bed,
And bowery covert o’er her head,
A forked pine supplies.”

GOLDFINCH.

THISTLE FINCH. GOLDSPIK.

GOLDIE. KING HARRY. RED-CAP. PROUD-TAIL.

FIGURE 45.

Carduelis elegans is the scientific name of this most beautiful and musical of Finches; from *carduus*, a thistle, of the downy seeds of which the bird is very fond; the meaning of the second, or specific name, we need hardly explain, its resemblance to an English word most applicable to the Goldfinch, rendering it sufficiently plain. Master Goldie is, in truth, an elegant fellow, alike in shape and dress; and he seems to know it, too. King Harry himself bore not his honours with a prouder air; his are royal robes, and right royally does he wear them; and yet he is a sprightly bird, and very affable, as greatness should be, and therefore he is a universal favourite; loved and admired by all, whether he be caged or free. Would you see him in his glory, go out on a bright autumnal day, to some waste ground, where thistles are plentiful; there he is, flying from clump to clump, clinging to the prickly stems, picking out the downy seeds, and feasting to his heart's content, and twittering his lively notes to express his satisfaction. How the gold of his throat and wings gleams in the sunshine, finely relieved by the glossy black of the top of the head, and neck, tail, and upper and lower parts of the wings; the pale brown of the back shines like satin, and the intense crimson above and beneath the eyes glows like a ruby. How sprightly are all the motions of the bird, and how graceful! Who that could see it thus, in the full enjoyment of liberty, would like to have it shut up in a close cage? let the bars be ever so bright with gilding, they are but prison bars to him. He may be very cheerful, and perform a number of amusing tricks, such as drawing up water and seed in his tiny bucket. He may sing till he makes the place of his confinement echo again, for sing he must, whether in freedom or captivity. But only give him a chance of escape, and see how gladly he will fly away to the green woods and the flowery meadows.

Did my readers ever hear what Geoffrey Chaucer, who has

been called the father of English poetry, said upon this subject? Hear his lines—

“Take any bird, and put it in a cage,
And do thy best and utmost to engage
The bird to love it; give it meat and drink,
And every dainty housewife can bethink;
And keep the cage as cleanly as you may,
And let it be with gilt never so gay;
Yet had this bird by twenty thousand fold,
Rather be in a forest wild and cold,
And feed on worms, and such like wretchedness:
Yea, ever will he tax his whole address,
To get out of the cage when best he may,
His liberty the bird desireth aye.”


Macgillivray calls this bird the Red-fronted Thistlefinch, and in France it is termed *Chardonneret*, from *Chardon*, a thistle. It feeds principally upon seeds of what is called the composite order of plants, most of which have a downy substance attached to them, like those of the plant above named and the groundsel. In spring the Goldie or Goldspink, as the Scotch call him, picks the seeds out of the fir-cones, and feasts upon them. He begins to sing his sweet and varied song about the end of March, and continues it for four months or so. The nest of the bird, which Bolton says is completed in three days, although it is very neatly and carefully finished, is composed externally of grass, small twigs and roots, moss, and lichens; internally of wool and hair, the down of the willow and other plants, and sometimes a few leaves or feathers, all closely interwoven. The eggs, four or five in number, are bluish white or light grey, slightly spotted and occasionally streaked with greyish purple and brown; they are nine-twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad. Two broods are usually reared in the year. Grahame shall tell us where the nest is usually placed.—

“With equal art externally disguised,
But of internal structure passing far
The feathered concaves of the other tribes,
The GOLDFINCH weaves, with willow down inlaid,
And cannach tufts, his wonderful abode.
Sometimes, suspended at the limber end
Of plane-tree spray, among the broad-leaved shoots,
The tiny hammock swings to every gale;

Sometimes in closest thickets 't is conceal'd;
 Sometimes in hedge luxuriant, where the brier,
 The bramble, and the crooked plum-tree branch,
 Warp through the thorn, surmounted by the flowers
 Of climbing vetch, and honeysuckle wild,
 All undefaced by Art's deforming hand.
 But mark the pretty bird himself! how light
 And quick his every motion, every note!
 How beautiful his plumes! his red-tinged head;
 His breast of brown: and see him stretch his wing;
 A fairy fan of golden spokes it seems.
 Oft on the thistle's tuft he, nibbling, sits,
 Light as the down; then, 'mid a flight of downs,
 He wings his way, piping his shrillest call."

LINNET.

COMMON, BROWN, GREY, RED-BREASTED, ROSE, OR WHIN LINNET.
 GREATER REDPOLE. LINTIE.

FIGURE 46. 

A VERY different bird in appearance from the last, is the plain little Brown Linnet, a sober-coloured bird generally, although its plumage changes considerably at different periods, and frequently there is a beautiful rose-coloured flush, diffused, as it were, over nearly the whole surface, but especially shewing itself on the breast, top of the head, and middle of the back and wings; it always seems to us as if the gentle bird were blushing at the praises which its fine voice and good qualities call forth. A very sweet songster is the Linnet, and a very pretty interesting bird, although not so showy as most others of the Finch tribe, to which it properly belongs. It possesses great imitative powers, and from its docility may be easily trained and taught; it is therefore highly valued as a cage and aviary bird. Its scientific name is *Fringilla*, or *Linaria cannabina*, derived, says Morris, from *linum*, flax; and *canna*, a cane or reed. The reason of the first term we can well understand, as the bird feeds much on the flax seed; but we are at a loss to account for the second, as there seems no sort of natural connection between the habits or food of the bird,

and the aquatic plants from which the specific name is said to come.

The favourite haunts of the Linnet, which is a permanent resident in this country, are the wild hilly tracts, where the gorse, or whin, the broom and the heather, grow abundantly, as well as the plants upon whose seeds they chiefly feed: there they find both food and shelter, and are seldom disturbed by the presence of man. In the winter, however, they assemble in flocks, and betake them to the cultivated grounds, where they are destroyed in large numbers, being snared or shot, like the Finches and Larks, for the sake of their flesh.

Small twigs and stalks of grass, intermixed with moss and wool, and lined with feathers and hair, compose the nest of the Lintie, or Lintwhite, as this bird is called in Scotland, where it is perhaps more plentiful than in the southern parts of the island. It is a neat structure, and is commonly placed on one of the low shrubs or bushes which grow upon the moor and mountain side; sometimes it may be found among the tall grass or heather; and sometimes, though rarely, in a tree, ten or twelve feet from the ground. The eggs usually number from four to six; they measure about nine-twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad; the colour is usually a bluish white, spotted most thickly at the larger end, with purplish grey and reddish brown. Some have been found of a dull dark red colour, without spots, and some of a pure white.

The poet Darwin will furnish us with a few lines descriptive of the nest of this bird.

“The busy birds with nice selection cull
Soft thistle-down, grey moss, and scatter’d wool;
Far from each prying eye the nest prepare,
Form’d of warm moss, and lined with softest hair.
Week after week, regardless of her food,
The incumbent Linnet warms her future brood;
Each spotted egg with ivory bill she turns,
Day after day with fond impatience burns;
Hears the young prisoner chirping in his cell,
And breaks in hemispheres the fragile shell.”

LESSER REDPOLE.

LITTLE REDPOLE LINNET.

FIGURE 47.

THIS is a much smaller bird than the common Linnet, to which, in many respects, it bears a close resemblance. Naturalists call it *Fringilla linaria*, or *Linaria minor*, that is the Flax Finch, or the Lesser Flax-bird. In the north of England, Ireland, and Scotland, it resides throughout the year, but only appears in the south during the autumn and winter, except occasionally and rarely. It is a pretty lively bird, very nimble and active, like the Titmouse, assuming a great variety of curious attitudes, when hunting for food, among the birch and alder trees, which it chiefly frequents. The great American naturalist says that few birds display a more affectionate disposition than this, and tells us how pleased he was to see several on a twig, feeding each other by passing a seed from bill to bill. They breed chiefly in the hilly districts, like the Linnet, and build their nests in a low bush or tree, or among the heather on the ground; it is formed of moss, grass, stems, and willow catkins, the last, and also feathers, being used for the lining. The eggs, four or five in number, are of a pale bluish green colour, spotted with brown. The young are hatched late, and are seldom ready to fly before the end of June, or beginning of July.

The following lines by Grahame will apply as well to this as to the last species:—

“When whinny braes are garlanded with gold,
And, blithe, the lamb pursues, in merry chase,
His twin around the bush; the Linnet, then,
Within the prickly fortress builds her bower,
And warmly lines it round, with hair and wool
Inwove. Sweet minstrel, may'st thou long delight
The whinny know, and broomy brae, and bank
Of fragrant birch! May never fowler's snare
Tangle thy struggling foot!”

BULLFINCH.

COAL-HOOD. RED-HOOP. TINY-HOOP. ALP. POPE. NOPE.

FIGURE 48.

THIS is rather a handsome than an elegant bird; the shape is somewhat clumsy, but the plumage exceedingly rich and striking. We need not describe it, as all our readers must have seen the large-bodied, red-breasted, and black-hooded Finch, called by naturalists *Loxia pyrrhula*, or *Pyrrhula vulgaris*; the first term signifying oblique or transverse, from the shape of the bill; the second a bird with a red plumage, from *pyrros*, red; and the third, *vulgaris*, common.

The Bullfinch is more especially a bird of the greenwood; it is not much found in either very barren or very highly-cultivated districts, although its retreats are not generally far from the latter. It delights to dwell amid the chequered shade of interlacing boughs, from whence it can sally out to some near-at-hand orchard or garden, to feast upon the ripe fruit, or the blossom buds of various trees, such as the apple, pear, cherry, medlar, gooseberry, or the plum. Mr. Morris conjectures that the common name of this bird is a corruption of Budfinch, or Boodfinch, as it is pronounced in the north. Besides fruit, this Finch feeds on the seeds and leaves of groundsel and other weeds, hips and haws, and various kinds of berries.

The natural song of the Bullfinch is a short, sweet, plaintive piping, while giving utterance to which it generally flirts up the tail in a very curious manner. Probably, says Morris, its vernacular, that is, common, names Nope, Hoop, Pope, are derived from its resemblance to these sounds. In spring, while the hen is sitting on her nest, the male bird will pour out for hours together, a low and broken warble, as it would seem, to cheer and enliven her labours, and while doing so, he keeps puffing out his feathers, and wriggling his head about in a most extraordinary manner, no doubt to shew his affection. The Bullfinch is a very teachable bird; he learns to pipe and whistle tunes, and even to articulate words. Some of the birds so taught fetch high prices; they are chiefly brought from Germany.

Our Bully generally commences housekeeping at the beginning of May; he chooses perhaps a fir tree, perhaps a hawthorn, or some other thick bush, "and there he makes his home," at a height, generally, of not less than four or five feet from the ground. He is not so neat a builder as are nearly all the other members of his family; the materials he uses are twigs, fine roots, and moss. The eggs, four or five in number, are of a pale blue, speckled and streaked with purplish grey and reddish brown; they are nine and a half twelfths of an inch long by seven and a half broad. Bullfinches frequently build in shrubberies and gardens; a gentleman residing at Frickley Hall, near Doncaster, relates that a hen bird of this species, which was sitting in a laurel near the house, suffered herself to be touched, and would feed from the hand without any manifestation of fear.

Numerous other anecdotes might be related to shew how gentle and docile a bird this is, but we must now bring our agreeable task to a conclusion. Ere long we shall have another talk with our young readers about birds, or some other of the various creatures which the all-wise and good God has seen fit to create for the use, enjoyment, and instruction of man.

FINIS.

INDEX.

Golden Eagle	1	Wood Warbler	40
Peregrine Falcon	4	Willow Warbler	41
Kestrel	6	Chiff Chaff	42
Sparrow-Hawk	8	Wren	43
Barn Owl	10	Goldcrest	45
Red-backed Shrike	12	Great Titmouse	47
Spotted Flycatcher	14	Blue Tit	49
Dipper	16	Long-tailed Tit	51
Missel, or Mistle Thrush	17	Pied Wagtail	53
Song Thrush	19	Grey Wagtail	55
Blackbird	21	Tree Pipit	56
Ring Ouzel	23	Meadow Pipit	57
Dunnock	24	Sky Lark	59
Redbreast	25	Wood Lark	61
Redstart	28	Bunting	62
Stonechat	29	Black-headed Bunting . .	63
Whinchat	30	Yellow-hammer	64
Wheatear	31	Chaffinch	66
Sedge Warbler	32	House Sparrow	68
Reed Warbler	33	Greenfinch	71
Nightingale	34	Goldfinch	72
Blackcap	37	Linnet	74
Garden Warbler	38	Lesser Redpole	76
Whitethroat	39	Bullfinch	77



